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The Week

THE bombardment of war-debt notes back and forth across the Atlantic has done little to alter the fundamental facts of the situation. For a long time it has been clear that our European debtors must choose, as to the December 15 payment, between fulfilling the old terms of the debt and default. Many members of Congress, including some of the most truculent, have hoped they would default, believing it would be better all around if the debts were not paid, yet being too cowardly to face their constituents and support this unpopular view. But even the wildest optimist does not suppose that the instalment of June 15 next will be paid by anybody, under the existing terms. Either Mr. Roosevelt will have succeeded in getting some modification by then, or our debtors will one and all go in for non-violent non-coöperation. Payment cannot be enforced; our real choice is whether we shall accept cancellation gracefully, and try to salvage what we can out of the wreck, or be stiff-necked about it and see a general repudiation. There is something to be said for repudiation: not only would it give the American government an excellent excuse to present to the people, but it would probably bring in its wake a wholesale enforced scaling down of debts, both internal and external, throughout the world. Since, however, such a scaling down is the last thing most members of the American Congress want, it is fair to suppose that after the facts have been driven into their heads, either this session or the next will undertake to act far more reasonably than the present oratory would lead anyone to expect.

THE League Assembly has "passed the buck" on the Lytton Report. Lacking courage to indict Japan for her violations of the Nine Power Treaty and the Pact of Paris, to say nothing of her obligations under the League Covenant, the Assembly has referred the whole matter to a "Committee of Nineteen." What it is to do and how it will do it are far from clear. It is perfectly plain that Japan is guilty and that the men sitting in the Assembly, in their private capacity, believe her guilty. Their failure to take public action against her is due to several causes. One of these is Japan's threat to resign from the League in case of an unfavorable judgment; the statesmen of Geneva probably feel that it is better for injustice to be done a weak Power like China than for a strong Power like Japan to go outside the League's orbit. Another reason is that England and France are notoriously pro-Japanese, and could not be depended upon to shoulder the burden of acting under a League decision as they would be called upon to act. An adverse decision might call into operation Article 16 of the Covenant, which provides for punitive measures against a Power guilty of aggression, a boycott and isolation. The only important Power which has even suggested that it would go through with such a thing is a non-League member, the United States—and even here, there is widespread and well grounded opposition to the "Stimson doctrine." The League does not dare act against Japan for fear it will be destroyed; but a League which cannot act in such a situation as the Manchurian is shorn of 75 per cent of its importance as a disciplinary organization. It is a painful lesson for those who hope for a new international order, but a salutary one.

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ALMOST the only solid achievements of international diplomacy in the past thirteen years have been the Washington and London naval agreements which put an end to the worst aspects of the naval-building race. Now comes Japan with a fair-sounding scheme for limiting armaments which would nevertheless have the effect of reopening those agreements without much likelihood of replacing them with new ones. Although the British and American naval authorities have always felt that the 5-5-3 ratio adopted at Washington gave Japan a larger navy than it should have had, the Japanese now wish an even higher proportion of ships for themselves. They suggest that naval armament be limited primarily to defensive weapons. They would also divide the world into zones or regions, and have a series of regional conferences agree upon the armament allotted to each interested Power in that area. With the nations in their present state of mind, the outcome of any such attempt would be clear: it would be the destruction of all existing restraints and the resumption of the ruinous competition in armament of the old days.

REPORTS from Berlin concerning President von Hindenburg's weakened physical condition explain the haste with which the Reichstag, at the instigation of the Hitlerites, adopted new and definite provisions for the presidential succession in case of disability or death. It was the fear that Chancellor von Schleicher would, in such an eventuality, assume the responsibilities of office and might appoint a Hohenzollern regent, that prompted this procedure. Not that the National Socialists are opposed to an indirect restoration of the monarchy; but they insist that the new regime shall be brought into being with their assistance. For the present, relations between von Schleicher and Hitler seem to be amicable, and negotiations for governmental coöperation are still in progress. Von Schleicher would have found it impossible to obtain the adjournment of the Reichstag for the Christmas holidays without a previous understanding with the Fascist leader. That he was able to do so in the midst of the most serious crisis the National Socialist party had yet to face testifies to the Chancellor's skillful statesmanship. We have repeatedly called attention to the divergence of aims that has always threatened the integrity of the Hitler forces. When Hindenburg, a few weeks ago, suggested the appointment of Gregor Strasser, head of the national organization department of the Nazis and leader of that wing of the party which advocates a more active pro-labor policy, to the Chancellorship, this divergence flared up into open dissension. Hitler curtly refused to consider anyone but himself for the office, whereupon he was authorized to form a new government under terms the impossibility of which we have already discussed. Strasser resigned from all party offices and from the Reichstag, and was followed by Gottfried Feder, the real founder of the National Socialist party. They are supported in their position by about fifty deputies.

VON SCHLEICHER has learned from his experiences in the von Papen government that Germany cannot be ruled against the entire working class. He is now shaping his policies to win the support not only of the nationalist parties, but of the Centrist party as well with the (remote) possibility of toleration on the part of the Social Democrats. To this end he has already approached the General German Trade Union Federation through its Chairman, Leipart, and the Christian Trade Unions, with concessions in the form of the revocation of the most flagrant anti-labor provisions in the von Papen One Year Plan. The true character of General von Schleicher's dictatorship will become apparent in its attitude toward militant labor, in the coming suppression of the Communist party and the ruthless prevention of labor disputes on a large scale.

MRS. Franklin Roosevelt will have a nice decision to make, on or before the fourth of next March. At the present time, she is holding four jobs: she is performing an extremely useful function by teaching in a New York City school, she is concerned with a furniture factory, she is the editor of Babies: Just Babies, and she is speaking over the radio in a so-called "sponsored program," on behalf of an advertiser. But after March 4, she will also be the mistress of the White House. Should she, then, resign from her various positions? Some ardent feminists will come forward to say that she should not; that she has been elected to no public office, and that she is entitled to lead her own life regardless of the political fortunes of her husband. At the other end of the scale are those who believe a married woman's place is in the home, that being the President's wife is a full-time job in itself and a very important one, and that the United States will be made faintly ridiculous in the eyes of European countries if Mrs. Roosevelt attempts to commute between Washington and New York, a state banquet tonight, school tomorrow morning, or excuses herself briefly from a reception for the diplomatic corps to make her broadcast, like Floyd Gibbons or Bing Crosby. Between these two extremes there will be many who, while inclined to sympathize with Mrs. Roosevelt's ambition, will point out that her jobs as radio monologist and Macfadden editor probably were awarded to her, at least partially, because of her impending elevation to a place as the President's wife. At any rate, we should like to hear from the National Woman's party on the subject.

THE New Republic has recently reviewed, and discussed editorially, John L. Spivak's book "Georgia Nigger," which portrays vividly and accurately the brutality exhibited toward prisoners,

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white or black, in the Southern states (not that brutality is confined to that part of the country!). We are glad to report that an unusually fine motion picture dealing with the same subject is now being exhibited. It is called "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang," and was produced by Warner Brothers, with Paul Muni in the leading role. The film was made from the book, "I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang" (Vanguard), by "R. E. Burns." This book was the true account of a man's life on a Southern chain gang, where he had been sent because of his accidental and involuntary participation in a crime. He escaped, went to Chicago and became a respected and substantial citizen. Betrayed to the authorities by a jealous woman, he waived extradition and returned to Georgia, on the promise of only nominal further punishment. When Georgia broke its word, he managed to escape again and is still in hiding. The motion picture, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, is one of the finest to come from Hollywood in many a day. It tells with unflinching realism how chain-gang prisoners are treated and at the same time through its direction and acting it is raised far above the level of mere journalistic exposure. It will bring home the conditions among prisoners to millions of persons who will never read Mr. Spivak's book or any other volume of the same sort.

A TABLE recently published in State Government, the journal of the American Legislators' Association, gives us some melancholy but important information about the bank failures during the depression, from January, 1930, to September, 1932. Comparing the total deposits in closed banks with those in banks which did not close, we find that in Arkansas, for instance, national banks which suspended contained 11.5 percent of the deposits in all national banks, while the corresponding figure for state banks was 36.5 percent. In Florida the percentage for national banks was 10.5, and for state banks, 37.6. In Mississippi, the two figures were 22.7 and 26.7, and in North Carolina, with the worst percentage showing of all, they were 32.2 and 28.5. In dollars, the worst showing among the national banks was made by Pennsylvania, with deposits in closed banks of $112,000,000, while among state banks Ohio holds the record with $263,000,000—closely followed by such states as New York ($256,000,000), Illinois ($247,000,000) and Pennsylvania ($241,000,000). Not all of the money deposited in closed banks is lost, of course; but it will be a long time before any accurate estimate can be made of the proportion saved from the wreck. The national banks on the whole made a far better showing than the state institutions. Only 10.4 percent of the former closed, as against 22.5 percent of the latter. The closed national banks had only 3.6 percent of the total national bank deposits, while the state banks had 6.5 percent. There were 778 national bank failures, 3,898 failures of state banks. The money involved in the former case was $783,000,000, and in the latter, $2,356,000,000. While this was going on, there was in Canada not one single bank failure. Canada has been hurt by the depression about as badly, in proportion to her population and the character of her industries, as has the United States; but the Canadians have a quaint idea that banks ought to safeguard the money of depositors and the Canadian law sees to it that they do.

THIS week's newspapers say that Mr. Roosevelt has almost decided to make Miss Frances Perkins his Secretary of Labor and the first woman ever to sit in a presidential Cabinet. We hope the reports prove to be correct, though they seem almost too good to be true. Miss Perkins is not only far better than any of the other candidates suggested for the place; she is so able that we don't see how Mr. Roosevelt could have found anywhere a more satisfactory choice.

A Deflationary Budget

ON WEDNESDAY, December 7, President Hoover sent to Congress his annual budget message, recommending that federal appropriations be trimmed from the $4,800,000,000 of the fiscal year 1932 to $4,218,000,000, and that a general manufacturers' sales tax be added to the sources of revenue already in sight, in order to bring the budget into balance. He wrote that an excess of expenditures "cannot be continued without disaster to the federal finances. . . . I cannot too strongly urge that every effort be made to limit expenditure and avoid additional obligations not only in the interest of the already heavily burdened taxpayer but in the interest of the very integrity of the finances of the federal government."

From this statement, as well as from others by those who urge the supreme importance of federal economy, it might be inferred that the credit of the United States government is in a perilous state. Yet less than a week later the Treasury placed on sale one-year certificates bearing interest of only three-fourths of one percent, and received subscriptions of over $4,128,000,000—or more than sixteen times the amount offered, which was $250,000,000. The government could thus have borrowed, at the lowest rate of interest ever fixed, almost enough to have paid all its expenses for a year without a cent of revenue from any other source. Nor is this all. The Treasury at the same time offered to sell $350,000,000 of four-year notes at 2¾ percent, and received subscriptions exceeding $6,677,000,000. The money ready to buy these two issues alone would have paid off at one stroke more than half the national debt, or it would have financed a public-works program more than twice as large as the largest ever suggested even in the most radical proposal of the sort—that of the Socialist party.

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Of course it might have been difficult to get so much money, and at such favorable terms, if it had not been known that an effort to balance the budget was to be made. The incident reveals nevertheless that federal credit, far from being near its last gasp, has never been better. If, on other grounds, it were decided to pursue a policy of expansion rather than of deflation, it would certainly be possible to borrow the necessary money.

The theory of the budget-balancers has never been fully and explicitly stated, but as far as we can discern any cool reasoning behind it, it runs about as follows. In order to have a revival, we must have new investment and a much wider use of bank credit by private enterprise. Extensive federal borrowing, because it endangers the credit of the government, has a depressing effect on the prices of government securities. Thus it endangers the solvency, or reduces the assets of banks and other financial institutions which invest largely in these securities. It furthermore tends to depress private bonds. The effect is enhanced by an intangible lack of confidence. Banks become less ready to lend to private borrowers, people will not issue or buy bonds, and credit resources are diverted to public use from the private channels where they ought to be flowing.

This reasoning is questionable on two grounds. We have already seen that the demand for government securities is such that there would be little danger to public credit, even if many more were issued. And it does not follow that banks will lend to private borrowers, or that private bonds will be issued and sold, in so far as the available credit resources are not absorbed by public borrowing. Here are ten billion dollars of available credit, not asked for by government, which are not flowing into private enterprise. No matter how much confidence in public credit there may be, there is no confidence that private enterprise can, under present circumstances, make money on borrowed capital.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hoover's budget is calculated to lessen still further the chances of private enterprise. His economies propose to reduce the purchasing power for industry's products. He wants the salaries of government employees cut another 11 percent. He wants to stop all further appropriations for roads or other public works. He warns against any extension of unemployment relief. He recommends cutting many millions of dollars from veterans' relief. No matter how little the veterans in question may deserve the money, this action certainly means that they will be able to buy less, and that those among them who will thus be made destitute will be thrown on local public or private charity. It would be well to stop giving veterans money because they are veterans, in order to use the same amount for the benefit of all those who really need it. But the trimming of expenditure in itself can mean nothing else than a reduction of the markets for goods. Having recommended these actions to diminish the nation's purchasing power, Mr. Hoover goes on to urge a sales tax on nearly all goods produced. In so far as this is passed on to consumers, it will boost prices and lessen industry's chance to sell. All these things taken together will not reduce anybody's taxes one cent. They will not lessen any fixed charges on industry which governmental expenses may bring about.

Nobody could logically urge such a policy unless he believed that deflation was essential to recovery. But government budgets do not stand by themselves; they have meaning only in the setting of the total national economy. If our course is set toward deflation, we ought to carry it through.

An intelligent plan of deflation would be concerned, not, as is Mr. Hoover's policy, with reducing the incomes of millions of average consumers, but with increasing their purchasing power by means of reducing the prices they have to pay. It would be chiefly concerned with getting down those prices which have fallen least. Could not steel be sold cheaper, and automobiles, and hundreds of other industrial products? If they were, would not markets expand? Could not railroad rates be reduced? If farmers and small homeowners had to pay less in mortgage interest and property taxes, would they not be enabled to buy more?

The sticking point in most of these cases has little to do with federal fiscal policy. It has to do with private fixed charges. If a deflation of this sort is to be carried out, private bonds *must* suffer, mortgages must be canceled or reduced. Of course banks will not lend money to, or buy the securities of, those railroads and industrial concerns which already have too heavy fixed charges in relation to the current demand for their products at existing price levels. Efforts to prevent defaults and receiverships, or to sustain bond prices, are quite beside the point, as long as we are bent on deflation. The only chance for private borrowing and private investment to revive will come after the necessary reduction of debt and loss of capital values, not before. There is no hope that credit will be pumped into private enterprise under existing circumstances just because government refuses to employ it.

So far has the collapse gone that it is doubtful if any possible expansion of government expenditure, based on borrowing, could restore anything like the old price level and make unnecessary further deflation of capital. But the federal government might somewhat soften the rigors of the readjustment if it adopted a more liberal spending and borrowing policy than Mr. Hoover recommends. At least it could enlarge, rather than restrict, the amount of purchasing power in circulation. It could provide a cushion for industry, agriculture and the unemployed to fall upon.

We could begin by an intelligent classification of government accounts into the form recognized

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as essential for any industrial undertaking. This would set up a capital account as distinct from an account of current receipts and expenditures. We should know whether we were borrowing for lasting improvements or for current expenses. We could utilize the present plethora of cheap money and take advantage of present low prices to build public works that we know will be needed in any case. If the federal government has already reached the limit in such enterprises—as it has not in all probability—state and local governments certainly have not. Even last year they were some $2,000,000,000 behind normal schedules. Federal credit could be utilized to enable them to go ahead. Efforts to minimize future debt burdens could be made by converting old debts at higher rates of interest into new ones at much lower rates.

At the same time the tax structure, federal and local, should be revised to promise the maximum future yield, based as far as possible on ability to pay. This means greater reliance on progressive income, profits and estate taxes, and less reliance on property, excise and sales taxes. With a carefully calculated tax on excess profits or corporate surpluses, the government could quickly wipe out, in a future period of prosperity, any increase of debt which it now incurred. By increasing income-tax rates and granting exemptions in states having income taxes, it could retain at least its present revenue from this source, and encourage the states to raise a larger proportion of their taxes in this way.

Any revision of governmental expenses should be carried out with a view to transferring efforts from unjust or wasteful activities to more useful ones. The biggest possibility of saving lies in the debt service, which consumes about 35 percent of the budget. Present conversion and future retirement are the indicated methods here. The next is in military and naval expenditures and veterans' relief. We could get along with fewer battleships and military training camps, with less relief for veterans who do not need it and were not injured in the War. The War and Navy departments consume 20 percent of the budget, and veterans about 28 percent. From savings in these directions we could devote more money to unemployment relief and permanently useful construction, without crippling the civilian departments or reducing the already low salaries they pay; these departments together now take only about 13 percent of what the government spends.

Having got its own affairs in hand this way, the government could inaugurate other measures to hasten the deflation of capital. It could refuse to lend any more to railroads, banks or insurance companies which in any case will have to be reorganized. And it could press forward the downward revision of mortgage charges on farms and houses.

Such hope of hastening domestic revival as there is, and of preventing as much suffering as possible in the meantime, lies in a combination of policies like this. It does not lie in pretending that to balance the budget, by whatever means, is the main road to salvation.

Another Scrap of Paper

THE Disarmament Conference, so we are told in dispatches from Geneva, has successfully passed another grave crisis. Because of the heroic work behind the scenes of that genius at compromise, Ramsay MacDonald, a new agreement has been signed by Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. It gives Germany theoretical equality of armament with the other Great Powers, thus making it possible for her to come back into the conference. It gives France guarantees of security, the nature of which is at present far from clear. It looks forward hopefully to a substantial measure of reduced armament. And unbelievable as it may seem, it once again pledges the signatory nations not to resort to war. The way in which Europe, about every six months, feels it necessary to sign another agreement not to resort to war shows how lightly her statesmen have taken the similar promises they have made in the Covenant of the League, the Locarno agreement, the Pact of Paris and Heaven knows where else.

Some cynical persons are suggesting that the new agreement which is hailed as such a master stroke of diplomacy has no nobler aim than to impress the United States that Europe really is setting its house in order and is therefore entitled to drastic reduction or cancellation of the war debts; but this interpretation ignores some of the realities of the European situation. The breakdown of the disarmament conference—for it was nothing less than that—had deepened the peril of a position which was already serious enough. The forces now in control of Germany are far less conciliatory than those of the past. Germany is already partially rearmed, so far as infantry is concerned, through the vast "private armies" of various political parties. Her threat to go her own way, ignoring Geneva, was therefore one with dangerous potentialities.

On the other hand, one of the few solid facts about European diplomacy of the past thirteen years has been that France would not permit the Germans to do anything which, in her own opinion, imperiled her security. The very minimum which she would consider an adequate bulwark would be an iron-clad guarantee by Great Britain and the United States to come to her assistance in case of a German attack. President Wilson signed such a promise only to see it repudiated by Congress and American public opinion. Since then, the French have never ceased to fight for a renewal and ratification of that document. They profess

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to feel that they now have it, in the new agreement signed by Mr. Norman H. Davis on behalf of the United States. But nothing is more certain than that America will repudiate a new agreement which seriously commits us to support of France—and rightly. What France is protecting is the fruits of Versailles, and those poisonous fruits are responsible for half the sickness of the world today.

Despite the seeming evidence to the contrary, the statesmen assembled at Geneva are not a pack of simpletons. They know that nobody is going to guarantee the security of France on French terms. And since the rearming of Germany is dependent upon this, the conclusion is irresistible that this is just another time and face-saving device. They could not admit that disarmament is now impossible; so they hid that fact in a cloud of words from which it will presently, and slowly, emerge again. In the meantime, Germany comes back to Geneva, which may or may not be a gain. It is a gain if she stays—and the von Schleicher government gives some signs of looking for an excuse to climb down off its high horse. It is a loss if she presently goes again; for next time it will be ten times harder to bring her back.

Children in the Depression

THE ANNUAL report of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor which has just appeared presents some important material concerning the effect which three years of unemployment, poverty and hard times have had upon the health and character of children. The report, in its detached and objective way, paints a much milder picture than one might expect.

Statistically, conditions among children have shown progress, particularly in those cases where there has been steady improvement during the past few decades. The infant-mortality rate for 1931, based on still incomplete reports, is 62 per 1,000 births. The rate for the previous year was 65. Juvenile delinquency, though it is still on the increase, shows less of a proportionate rise than during former years. School attendance has increased. The maternal-mortality rate has declined, according to the report, the rate for 1930 being sixty-seven per 10,000 live births, as compared with seventy in 1929. There has also been a decrease in child labor, as in all other labor. The report hopefully states, however, that the decrease is greater than that of adult employment.

But the brightest side of the picture is overshadowed by the darker effects which the depression indubitably will have upon the American child. The report states, contrary to the insistence of President Hoover and Secretary Wilbur, that throughout the country undernourishment among children is general. In New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, there has been a considerable decrease in the consumption of milk, so necessary to growing boys and girls. Health officers everywhere report that child welfare and public nursing were usually the first services to be affected by reduction in state and municipal budgets.

The report also devotes much of its space to the "transient" boys, a quarter of a million of whom, under the age of twenty-one, have taken to the roads in despair of ever finding jobs. They roam from one railroad town to another, hopping freights, living in jungles along the tracks, bumming their food, coming in daily contact with perverts, "punks," "jockers," "yeggs," all the cynical and bitter riff-raff of the road. Many of the boys have been to high school; some have attended college. Their previous life and training has ill prepared them to resist the hardships of the road. Hundreds have died of pneumonia. Many, unpractised in hopping freights, which must be caught on the fly outside the yards, have fallen under the wheels. One railroad alone reported that during last winter fifty young men and boys were killed and a hundred maimed when they missed their footing or slipped between the cars.

But it is not so much what is actually taking place; it is what effect this era of starvation, of poverty, of disillusionment, will have upon the future health and character of the child. Such aspects cannot be treated in terms of statistics or figures, and the report wisely avoids such a dangerous terrain. The ultimate effect of undernourishment cannot of course be estimated, though as the report says, quoting Dr. William H. Welch, "Ground lost by undernourishment in childhood can never be regained." Neither, one may add, can hope, faith or self-assurance be regained when young people in their formative years are confronted by the constant specter of famine, by poverty, by parents sinking into inanition and despair, by a whole world crumbling before them. The children of today, like those raised in Europe during the War, will bear the deepest wounds of the world's economic defeat.

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Paying Too Much for Electricity

IT SEEMS clear that the American people are definitely of the opinion that retail electric rates are excessive. Householders are asking why they are compelled to pay, say, seven cents per kilowatt hour for current which their neighbor, the big industrialist, purchases for, say, seven mills, to operate his blast furnaces, mines and railways. The merchant, the farmer and the city councilor negotiating a contract for street lighting also question the rates charged them.

Our ambassador to Germany, the Honorable Frederick M. Sackett, gained nationwide popularity for his remark at the World Power Conference in Berlin two years ago to the effect that he knew of no other manufacturing industry where the sale price of the product to consumers is fifteen times the actual cost of production. In my opinion the Ambassador overestimated the spread. On the other hand the rejoinder of the spokesmen for the industry was unsatisfactory. The next day George N. Tidd, at Berlin, and J. F. Owens of the National Electric Light Association, then in convention in San Francisco, both explained that the apparently excessive price to domestic users for electric service was due to the high cost of distribution. Bananas, they said, were cheap off the plants in Central America, but necessarily cost many times more in a grocery store in New York. The gentlemen were quite right. It does cost more per unit to deliver electric energy in small quantities to a house on a side street than in huge volume to a great industrial plant—*but how much more?* That is what they failed to state and what the American people, and presumably Mr. Sackett himself, would like to know.

The surprising thing is that had Ambassador Sackett put this question to his critics they could not have answered him, because they did not know. The whole electrical industry could not have answered him, because it does not know. Its executives can tell you to the fraction of a mill what it costs to *generate* electricity, or what it costs to *transmit* current over high-tension lines for ten miles, or 350 miles. But they do not know what it costs per kilowatt hour to *distribute* energy from a local switchboard or the step-down station at the end of a transmission line to houses, stores and streets—a distance usually not more than five miles.

They have not investigated or discovered this important fact about their business in all the fifty years of its existence. Had Mr. Sackett gone to the libraries, even the engineering libraries, he would have found no light on this subject. Had he turned expectantly to the great engineering societies he would have been no better off.

The electric-service companies do not claim to keep cost accounts on distribution by such methods as are employed in every phase of the steel, clothing, paper and other industries. Only a few years ago every operating company in Pennsylvania officially advised an investigating commission that cost-keeping in the domestic field was not attempted. Mr. Alex Dow, president of the Detroit Edison Company, recently testified to the same effect. The Electrical World, recognized organ of the industry, in its leading editorial for the issue of March 7, 1931, "Turn More Light on Distribution Costs," frankly admitted the entire absence of these data and emphasized their public importance.

This indifference to distribution costs has been studied and deliberate. It is well known that the Uniform Classification of Accounts required of electrical companies by state public-service commissions originated with the National Electric Light Association. It provides no possibility of cost-finding on distribution. As a result the regulators know nothing of this matter. The absence of distribution-cost data has barely attracted their attention. Further, the Rate Research Committee of the N.E.L.A. has studiously avoided the question.

The upshot is that while the householder and commercial manager are told that their higher rates are primarily due to the high cost of distribution, there are absolutely no scientific data upon which such costs are based. The importance of the issue here raised becomes apparent when we consider that while the national electrical bill for 1931 was $2,000,000,000, 70 percent of this amount, or $1,400,000,000, was paid by the retail consumers. The energy they used possibly cost the companies $400,000,000 to generate and transmit to local substations. Therefore the retail users paid one billion dollars for local distribution. The item is impressive.

In the absence of a proper engineering, cost-finding technique we are compelled to resort to other methods in an effort to determine whether the above estimated distribution-cost figure is excessive and, if so, to what degree. The cost of distribution is a matter of concern to three classes of electric service: (1) domestic, including rural; (2) commercial light and power, retail; and (3) municipal, largely street lighting. The current consumed by each class, the revenue derived therefrom and the average rates paid in 1931 as reported by the N.E.L.A. were as follows:

	K.W.H In Billions	*Revenue In Millions*	*Av. Rate Per K.W.H*
Domestic	11,785	$686	5.82 cents
Commercial light and power	13,837	569	4.11 "
Municipal and street lighting	2,793	108	3.87 "
	28,415	$1,363	4.80 "

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To determine what part of this total charge for retail service belongs to distribution we may assume that the "transmitted current" costs on the average one and a half cents per kilowatt hour, including return on invested capital. The national average rate paid for wholesale transmitted power in 1931 was 1.48 cents per kilowatt hour.

There are municipalities owning their distribution systems, but buying current at wholesale, who pay for it in the neighborhood of one cent per kilowatt hour. That part of the sales price, therefore, which may be said to be attributable to the total national consumption of 28,415,000,000 kilowatt hours would be not more than $426,225,000. Subtracting this from the $1,363,000,000 of total revenue, there remains $936,775,000 to be justified as the cost, including profit, of distribution, or nearly one-half the revenues of the industry. A distribution overcharge of major proportions is here clearly indicated. This overcharge, as before stated, cannot be exactly determined. It can, however, be roughly approximated.

There is support for the statement that "the whole cost of distribution is approximately $7.50 per year per domestic consumer for 500 kilowatt hours of service, or one and a half cents per kilowatt hour." (See "On the Cost of Distribution of Electricity to Domestic Consumers," by Morris Llewellyn Cooke, cover page.) If, then, the cost of current ready for delivery is one and a half cents per kilowatt hour and the distribution cost is one and a half cents, a fair average price to the domestic consumer would be three cents per kilowatt hour with a fair profit left to the industry. But reports show that in 1931 the national average collected by the industry was 5.82 cents. Subtracting, we arrive at a suggested excess charge of 2.82 cents. Apply this to the nearly twelve billion kilowatt hours used in domestic service for that year and we arrive at an estimated unjustifiable charge of $330,000,000 for distribution expense. Even allowing two cents for distribution, the overcharge will still total $275,000,000.

In commercial service the average use per customer is much higher than domestic use and other factors are more favorable. Allowing one and a quarter cents for cost of current and the same for distribution, the overcharge in this field would be over $200,000,000. Even using the same cost figures as for domestic service, an overcharge of $150,000,000 is indicated. As for municipal service, no approximation of overcharge is possible because of varying local conditions and contracts. Hence, until we have some definite cost data scientifically determined to the contrary, the estimate of $400,000,000—possibly $500,000,000—annual overcharge on distribution seems justified and conservative, this despite the possibly misleading character of general averages when applied to certain special local conditions. The figures here used, however, are well within the facts for a great majority of urban situations.

Substantial support is given these estimates by the unexplained differences between the general level of rates charged by private and by the public plants. In Ontario, Canada, for instance, in the year 1930-31, the householders in 289 cities, towns and hamlets paid just a little over one and a half cents per kilowatt hour. In Seattle, where the public plant is in competition with a private plant, the average domestic cost is 2.8 cents and in Tacoma 1.72 cents per kilowatt hour. In Winnipeg and Fort William it was eight mills; in Ottawa nine mills. Thus our national average cost per kilowatt hour is more than three times that of Ontario and well over double that in several American cities having public plants. This difference in rates, though not an accurate measure of the difference in costs, is far too large to be accounted for by taxes and profits paid by private companies, charges which public plants customarily do not have to meet. The discrepancy is further emphasized by the fact that the capital outlay of public plants both in Ontario and the United States is being amortized, so that in time the people will own the plants outright. Under private ownership no such deduction is made, so that a return must be paid indefinitely by the public on the capital invested.

In spite of the dramatic drop in electric costs during the last ten years, rates for the great majority of small consumers have remained practically stationary. The average rates reported have fallen because a small percentage of the more well-to-do customers have received the advantage of the lower rates in stepped-rate schedules. In many places the changes in demand charges, service charges, minimum charges, etc., have actually raised rates for large numbers of consumers.

Notwithstanding this discrimination in rates, however, the consumption of electricity in our homes is slowly increasing. In 1926 the average domestic revenue stood at $29.70 and at $33.70 in 1931. Yet the industry has doubtless obtained a greater profit both per domestic consumer and per kilowatt hour used in domestic service with each drop in the national average of rates paid. The principal added expense to the companies has been for the current itself. If we compute the cost of this current at one and a half cents per kilowatt hour, we find that in each of the last five years the cost of the added current is only about half the added revenue received. Normal business usage in other lines suggests a smaller profit per unit as the number of units sold increases. In view of the fact that increased consumption at lower rates not only ensures larger net profits to the industry but removes the public feeling that it has an anti-social attitude, it is puzzling to understand why the industry has so persistently fought to maintain high rate levels.

That low rates result in greatly increased consumption is easily demonstrated. In the United

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States the average family consumption is less than 600 kilowatt hours per year; in Seattle it is nearly 1,200; in Ontario as a whole, 1,600; in Winnipeg over 4,000 kilowatt hours per year. It is clear that if we abandon our present topsy-turvy rate structure based on "all the traffic will bear" and replace this by one based on actual cost plus a fair profit, our present domestic use can speedily be trebled.

As a by-product a much better feeling on the part of the public toward the industry will be engendered. The people are now aware, from the revelations of the Federal Trade Commission investigation, that misleading propaganda, political activities and other anti-social practices sponsored by the National Electric Light Association and other agencies of the industry are largely paid for out of profits yielded by high rates to retail consumers.

To understand how the electrical industry has ignored modern cost accounting in the field under discussion one must go back fifty years to the time when electricity was used almost exclusively for lighting during a few hours at night. To succeed it was necessary to put the plant at work in the daytime. Hence the urge to sell current to factories for industrial purposes. This technically was called improving the load factor. It seemed, and was, at that time, more important to find customers who could use electricity in off-peak hours for plants designed primarily for night lighting. This absorbed the attention of the engineers and the executives and little attention was paid to distribution. But now that about half the revenue received is from distribution amounting to one billion dollars annually—eight billion dollars in the last ten years—through the tremendous growth of domestic usage, there is an obligation on the industry to give retail consumers the benefit of scientific cost-finding in respect to distribution already given to other consumers in the field of generation and transmission.

The importance of the domestic business as a financial stabilizer has, during the depression, been impressed upon the industry. While industrial use has materially decreased, household consumption of electricity has increased, and the total earnings show a decline of but 1.2 percent. Again the load factor in domestic use compares favorably with that of industry. A study by the Commonwealth Edison Company of Chicago disclosed it to be 31 percent. The old arguments seeking to justify discrimination against the retail consumer are disappearing. As a matter of fact, the most promising load builder for the immediate future lies in increased domestic use. But that result will not follow to the desired extent if the industry continues to penalize its customers in the home.

If it is objected that the further extension of the accounting classifications will burden the industry by an added expense, the answer is that the expense will not be increased because it is proposed to substitute for the present meaningless and cumbersome system a truly scientific system which will prove profitable both to the industry and to the consumers. To date, accounting in the industry has been developed almost wholly by accountants who knew nothing of the necessary engineering techniques. The time has come when the engineer must be called in, for the reason that, in order to practice effective cost-finding, expenses must be subdivided in accordance with the plant and work units involved. Each unit must have its standard, and comparisons must be made between the units and actual costs progressively as the work goes forward. It is not a question of further subdivision of accounts, or more elaborate distribution of general and overhead expense, but better organization of accounts and a more obvious tie-in of costs with the general books.

It is not hoped to obtain costs which are absolutely correct, but to obtain comparable costs under different conditions and in different localities for the light which these costs will throw upon the relative value of different devices, methods and administrative policies.

It is pertinent here to take note of a recent decision by the Indiana Public Service Commission in the Martinsville-Wabash electric case, now before the United States Supreme Court. The Commission fixed the domestic rate by first ascertaining the cost of "transmitted current" at the city limits. To this was added only the local distribution expense incurred within the city limits. This simplifies rate-making procedure. The significance of this case lies in the fact that a commission has recognized that retail costs consist of two factors: the one the cost of transmitted current, which is now generally known within reasonable limits; the other, local distribution costs, a scientific method of determining which must be devised.

The appliances of distribution, however much they may vary in size and number, are always the same. Everywhere and always we have poles, wires, transformers, meters and sometimes underground ducts. These factors are so constant that the day is not far off when, given a few easily obtained facts about a given community, the rates for retail electric service will be quickly determined on a slide rule. Such a development, however, would throw into the discard every retail rate schedule in the United States. By eliminating many present wasteful practices based on guesswork, as well as unjust overcharges on distribution, costs will be obtained which will drive drudgery out of the home and off the farm. The ledger balance of the commercial houses will be removed farther from the red and the tax levy for street lighting will be lessened. Another result of importance to investors and promoters will follow: the temptation will be materially lessened to form holding companies, whose chief reason for existence has been to provide reservoirs in which to drain off, and so conceal, the unjustified profits taken from retail consumers by operating companies.

MORRIS LLEWELLYN COOKE.

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Red Day in Washington

I: The Keys to the City

THE WAILING of sirens. Hens and dogs scurrying across the road. The roar of the escorting motorcycles. Movie trucks, their cameras perched on their tops like machine guns, lurking at points of vantage. Observation planes droning overhead. White faces peering out of the parked cars that lined the way. Dispatch riders tearing back and forth. And thus a cavalcade of 1,200 hunger marchers, lurching their way in trucks along the road from Baltimore, approached the capital.

The sacrosanct beehive there was being threatened and the whole district around Washington was alive with defenders. A cordon of cops shunted the trucks down New York Avenue, along which they proceeded a mile or so until they reached another cordon of cops lined up to bar them. There the hunger marchers found themselves bottled up with a steep bank to their left, a freightyard to their right and in front of them the cops, backed with machine guns and a gas squad of seventy-five trained men.

At the end of the avenue among his men was Major "Duck Legs" Brown, waddling about encouraging his braves, or every now and then stuffing himself into his blue coupe to be whisked down the avenue on mysterious missions. Newspaper men, photographers, movie camera men (hopefully lugging around gas masks), stood about calling each other "comrade" and longing for the marchers to start some trouble. The gas squad, with all their bombs slung in aprons on their stomachs (they had a new one that makes you puke if you get a whiff of it), were lined up and patiently waited while a frantic young man went rushing about to find the staff photographer for The Washington Times.

Meanwhile the hunger marchers, who had been riding standing in their trucks for two hours, waited quietly where they were until the leaders gave them the order to dismount. They were determined men and women in shabby clothes. While the leaders conferred, the band they had brought along with them played "The International" and other Communist songs. After a long conference among the leaders a whistle was blown and the marchers clambered out of their trucks to stretch themselves on the bleak avenue which the District of Washington had generously offered as a shelter and a home.

At once there appeared, almost out of the air, a swarm of furtive and lipless men in felt hats and spring overcoats who strolled ominously up and down the avenue. Many of them were disguised as marchers, the disguise consisting in not having shaved that morning or in carrying a copy of The Daily Worker. There were scores of them. With the uniformed police the marchers were matched almost man to man.

Darkness finally descended. The cordon of police across the avenue relaxed their vigilance and gathered in little groups chatting with reporters or among themselves. Major Brown, a contented smile on his face, had been wafted home to supper. Reporters, photographers, camera men, stood about grimly waiting for the story to break. Someone among the marchers had produced a mandolin and a group was singing. Someone else had organized a march, and the comrades were parading up and down the avenue singing the "International." Silhouetted against the darkening sky stood the gas squad on the crest of the cliff, while in the far distance, bathed in flood lights, glowed the dome of the Capitol. Washington, the city of white collars and red tape, slept peacefully, inviolate against hunger.

SLATER BROWN.

II: King Mob and John Law

WHEN THE hunger marchers in three columns entered Washington, the police convoyed them rapidly across the city to a desolate mile of concrete highway—the New York Avenue extension as it cuts through a ravine to join Bladensburg Road. Here the trucks were halted under guard.

The march had been planned since midsummer. Early in September it had been announced that "three thousand or more delegates elected by their Unemployed Councils, unions, fraternal organizations and at unemployed meetings" would appear in Washington at the opening of Congress "to present their program and demands for winter relief and unemployment insurance." For the delegates merely to have reached this ravine within sight of Capitol Hill was a triumph of organization.

The delegates had to be selected, and this in itself was a considerable task. Trucks in which to transport them had to be hired, bought or borrowed. Routes had to arranged and schedules harmonized, so that the marchers from Seattle might reach their destination on the same day as those from Los Angeles, New Orleans and Bangor. Meetings and parades had to be organized in every city through which the marchers passed. Food, winter clothing, sleeping quarters for the delegates; gasoline, oil and repairs for the trucks—all these essentials had in some way to be procured; and

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the Unemployed Councils, which directed the march, were penniless by definition.

I suggest to the editors of Fortune, those tycoons of business journalism, that they gather material for an article on the financial side of radical activities in this country. It is safe to say that they would discover nothing sensational. There are no international bankers darkly supporting the movement as a means of hastening the triumph of the Elders of Zion; there are no pots of Moscow gold; Moscow needs all its gold for the Five Year Plan. The accounts of radical organizations are in general carefully audited. They would show that money for a great demonstration like the hunger march is raised against obstacles, by dint of ingenuity and perseverance, from thousands of small givers and by a dozen varied means—by tag days, boxes jingled in the street, dances, rent parties, musicals, picnics, lectures, begging letters, personal solicitation, but most of all by meetings at which collections are taken. A rally at the Bronx Coliseum on the night before the New York and New England columns set out for Washington yielded $4,000; but this was the high point of the campaign, and the money had all been spent before it was received.

In general, the hunger march was impeded by a continual shortage of funds. It had to struggle, too, against interference by police that culminated in police-incited riots, like the one at Wilmington, Delaware. Yet in spite of everything, the marchers reached Washington on the scheduled day. If the Maryland state troopers hadn't forced the Western column to detour through Virginia, they would all have reached it on the scheduled hour. Merely from the standpoint of organization, this was a feat which few business corporations could equal.

But once the marchers reached Washington, they were confronted by another force incomparably stronger and almost as well organized. They were driven into a carefully chosen trap and the two ends of it were closed by the police. There was no escaping through the sides of the trap. The railroad yards below were guarded by scores of railroad dicks, sometimes lining the tracks, sometimes hiding in empty passenger cars. The high bank above New York Avenue was patrolled by squads of policemen armed with tear-gas bombs and with the new "D.M." gas, a few whiffs of which produce violent nausea. Behind these squads, a field telephone service had been strung from tree to tree and, still farther in the rear, United States park policemen were waiting to arrest stragglers. From the two ends of the street, machine guns could sweep the length of it, and the guns were ready. Meanwhile police cars, "bull motorcycles," went chugging up and down among the marchers; plain-clothes men circulated from group to group, listening for scraps of the conversations that died away as they approached; three bombing planes kept watch from above. At Fort Meyer, a few miles away, 4,000 Regulars were waiting, with all furloughs canceled, to take over the city on an hour's notice.

There was a moment when it seemed that these two organizations, one furnished with all the latest engines of war, the other completely unarmed, would come into violent contact. At five o'clock on Monday afternoon, the marchers lined up for a parade. Section by section they fell into rank with their banners. The Red Front Band struck up a tune and the line moved forward. A shudder of anticipation passed through the ranks of the police. Holsters were patted and gas bombs passed from hand to hand. "Come on you yellow bastards," one of the policemen shouted. The line of marchers came on, step by step, till they almost touched the rope that marked the limits of their prison. The police stirred happily. The movie men behind them got their gas masks out and began cranking their cameras. Reporters, pencil in hand, prepared to describe the slaughter. Above the tootling and tinkling of the band you could hear the scream of police sirens in the city. Suddenly the leader of the marchers gave an order. The column swung left, swung left again, retraced its steps. . . . The police slumped back with an air of disappointment. After all, there would be no riot.

Days afterwards I tried to understand the motives that led the police to make this provocative and absurd display of force against unarmed people who had broken, who intended to break no law.

Since the bonus riots last summer, the authorities have been uneasy. General Glassford, who recently resigned as chief of police, has been replaced by Major Ernest W. Brown. The reporters told me that Brown was determined to show that he could handle the hunger marchers more efficiently than Glassford and without the kindness shown to the bonus army. But this explains only part of the situation. Below the level of city politics, deep in the Anglo-Saxon mentality, lies a fear of the mob, the hungry mob that breaks shop windows, finds weapons, seizes your property, burns, ravishes, surrounds itself with an almost mystic terror. The primary purpose of the police is to combat the mob, disperse it ruthlessly—and the hunger marchers, so it seemed, were the mob incarnate. They had been preceded by the wildest rumors. The blue van third from the front in the Eastern column was supposed to be filled with machine guns. These were to be distributed among the unemployed of Washington, who would then seize the White House. The marchers would raid grocery stores, and beg on the streets, and the Negroes among them would rape white women. Salesmen went peddling riot insurance up and down Bladensburg Road, leaving terror behind them. Government clerks double-locked their doors; policemen fingered their guns.

But the hunger marchers in reality were neither

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armed nor were they in any sense a mob. On the contrary, nobody who watched them could fail to be impressed by their self-imposed discipline. Each truck had a captain, each column of trucks an elected leader; for every important decision, committees were chosen, and their orders obeyed. The marchers had been told not to talk to reporters, and none of them would talk unless given permission. They had been told not to answer insults from the police, and they stood silent under extreme provocation. They were dressed in shabby clothes, gray-greasy caps, torn sweaters, odd pairs of trousers black with street grime; at first glance they looked like a lot of Bowery bums; but at second glance you knew that nobody here would beg "a nickel for a cup of coffee, Mister." Something set them apart, an air of self-respect, of courage, of knowing why they had come. When the police, fingering gas-bombs or pistols, called them "yellow bastards," you felt ashamed to be standing on the side of the harness bulls.

That day, it was not a question of army against mob. On the contrary, a disciplined army of hunger marchers was faced by what was practically an armed mob of police. The marchers were obeying the law; the police were breaking it by keeping them prisoners. The suspected rioters were trying to keep peace; the guardians of the peace were trying by every possible means to provoke a riot.

I am aware that this last statement constitutes a serious charge against the police of Washington, but I am not the only one to have made it. There is, for example, Mr. Robert M. Buck, an editor of The Washington News. On Tuesday, December 6, under his own signature, Mr. Buck published a story which began: "The police cast aside all restraint of conduct last night. The 'rough stuff' they 'threw into' the hunger marchers convinced many observers that a deliberate incitement to riot was being attempted." The story went on to describe several examples of police provocation. Here, to complete Mr. Buck's story, are a few incidents which I either witnessed myself or heard described by people whose veracity I can trust:

On Monday afternoon the hunger marchers held a meeting within their detention camp. The police, from the high bank above, threw stones at the meeting. In orderly silence, the marchers moved aside from the part of the street where the stones were falling.

On Monday and Tuesday I saw policemen ripping banners from the sides of hunger marchers' trucks as they passed through the lines with food. The drivers reported that their tires had been slashed.

Women marchers were called "nigger lovers" and "niggermen's whores" by police officers, often within hearing of their husbands.

Marchers who wandered out of sight of their comrades returned in several cases with the mark of police knuckles on their faces.

On one or two occasions, tear-gas bombs went off in the camp "by accident."

Monday night was the climax of the provocations. The police stood round great bonfires drinking whiskey with some of the reporters (others having refused to join them). By midnight they all seemed tipsy, even the sergeants and lieutenants, and completely out of hand. At this moment a group of New Yorkers, representatives of the Civil Liberties Union and the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, arrived in taxicabs. They received permission from Inspector Davis to carry some of the marchers, those who were sick or exhausted, to lodgings in the city. As the taxis carried the marchers through the police lines, all sorts of insults were howled at them, and a policeman armed with a icepick punctured the tires. Somehow the taxis limped off. A member of the gas squad suggested throwing a bag of tear-gas bombs just for the fun of it. Another policeman drove a motorcycle drunkenly up and down the road where the hunger marchers were sleeping on the bare concrete, trying to see how close he could come to the sleeping men without actually running them down. "All night long," says Mr. Buck in his story, "the police in groups among themselves, milling around like the hunger marchers, vilified the latter, abusing them behind their backs when none were present, cursing at them when one or more came close enough."

That night the marchers really triumphed; there was no riot. On the following morning they won their permit for a parade to the Capitol.

The parade on Tuesday was an extraordinary affair, with more policemen than paraders. There were police lining both sides of the street, police preceding the first section and every one that followed, police marching rank by rank with the unemployed, police waiting at the Capitol, police motorcycles, staff cars, patrol wagons, inspectors, captains, lieutenants, plain-clothes men trying to look like Communists or reporters and looking instead like bulls out of harness. The spectators everywhere were silent, but their silence was of two sorts: in the poorer quarters interested, curious; in richer neighborhoods contemptuous. Once or twice somebody tried to cheer from the sidelines, but stopped when a policeman jostled him.

As the marchers climbed Capitol Hill, they were halted. A delegation went in to see Vice President Curtis and the Speaker. I followed them into the Capitol, then went upstairs to look at the parade from a window outside the press gallery of the Senate. Down New Jersey Avenue extended lines of blue policemen, blue motorcycles, a blue army—but in the midst of it there were banners and the Red Front Band still playing; I could distinguish the first bars of the "International." *Arise ye prisoners of starvation . . .* it was a strange thing to hear on Capitol Hill.

Washington. MALCOLM COWLEY.

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The Social Cant

FOR YEARS now, for a long time, ever since the machine left its factory moorings and drifted into the bayous of the critical vocabulary, critics have been writing about the poet and the machine. They write in two ways. The young men, full of breakfast and ignorance, turn shining morning faces to The Facts and challenge the poets to dishearten *them* with all their antique talk of a humanity not made of glass and steel. And the old men with their wrists still sore from the flogging of the dead donkeys of Humanism, turn sadder, wiser faces in the opposite direction—toward the bloody dawn of the new world which must, they feel, be somewhere—and complain that poets do not show them where it is.

The obvious intention of both is to imply that, whereas the poet as chauffeur or the poet as prophet might be welcome, the poet as poet has no place in the universe of the machine.

There is no occasion to refute the implication nor to examine the particular self-consciousness from which it leaks. Poetry is not a skill like glass-blowing which mechanization can destroy. It is an art. Or, if the word art is no longer admissible and the social vocabulary alone has present meaning, then it is the most effective means of searching and translating and recording in permanent and recreative symbols the experience of the race. All the histories of the Church ever written are footnotes to Dante. And the essential life of this century will be read in its poets long after its sociologues have dissolved into the journalistic pother from which they spring. The contemporary critic who sees nothing significant in a poem unless it uses the word dynamo, waves a submachine gun and draws its symbols from the New York morning papers of even date will eventually die—as the esthetical critics and the moral critics died before him. And his grandchildren will find in "Anabase," with its biblical and Asian images, and in "The Waste Land," with its Eastern references and its Elizabethan phrase, the understandable answer to questions neither Mr. Keynes nor Major Douglas nor the whole literature of Marxism will be able to resolve.

For the truth is that all that is living and substantial, rather than doctrinaire and dead, in the current cant of social criticism has long since found an expression in poetry. Mr. Eliot said more about the modern chaos which so disturbs his social critics in fifty or sixty lines than they will ever say in all their volumes. And said it ten years before. And the increasing plurality and anonymity of modern life which gives contemporary social criticism its only living justification has a clearer expression in modern verse than it has yet had in modern critical prose. For the chief characteristic of that verse is that it is no longer a poetry of introspection and inflamed personality but a poetry of man in the earth, an anonymous poetry of the generations of men moving up into the unknown continents of the age. The chief characteristic of that verse is that it has restored the sense of human destiny in this earth without which all the talk of revolution, military or mechanical, is so much melodrama spelled out of a movie scenario for the glorification of professional adventurers, sentimental intellectuals and gentlemen with an itch for shooting guns.

But the truth about contemporary poetry is not the point in issue. So long as the critics write and read and think in the vocabulary of Marxian dialectic they will fumble the meaning of poetry written in the vocabulary of poetry. And the fact that a poem purports to deal with the events of another century will be to them convincing proof that it has nothing to say to the events of this. The only point worth making in that connection is that contemporary poets have for the most part honorably continued to write poetry and refused to be herded with the sheep. And the only question of any importance whatever is the question whether the social cant is right in its not too mute assumption that poetry as such cannot *continue* to exist in the world of gang plows, kilowatt hours and automatic phones.

The answer will depend upon the view to be taken of the nature of Industrialism. For the social critic, whether he so realizes or not, rests his whole case upon certain industrial hypotheses. He believes that the world has been changed in a given direction by the mechanization of industry. All his values rest upon that assumption. All his conclusions are qualified by it. And if his belief is in error then his entire fabric falls. But the justification of his belief he has never established. And for one good and sufficient reason. Which is that no one, engineer, scientist, philosopher or literary critic, has as yet succeeded in discovering what exactly the thing called modern industrialism is.

Industrialism is the undiscovered continent of our time. We are aware of its existence. Its forests wall us in. But of the direction of its rivers or the location of its divides we have only the foggiest idea. There are writers—talkers rather—who continue to assume that since men created industrialism, men can continue to deal with industrialism as they please. These are the prophets of planned economies and Marxian-socialism-cum-twentieth-century-machines. The geography of industrialism is irrelevant to them

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because they will shortly change it. But all the available evidence suggests that industrialism is itself organic, a product of life which has long since passed beyond human control; that plans for the limitation of production in the interest of economic balance must fail in the future as all similar attempts to truncate an evolutionary process have failed in the past; and that the greatest danger to our civilization proceeds from our inability to chart the slopes and courses of the land in which we must continue to live.

The gentleman therefore who founds a literary position on industrial ground takes a considerable risk—a risk at least as great as that taken by the sixteenth-century cartographers who fixed the cities of Anahuac on what might or might not be good dry land. If he lays down rivers to exclude the poets his exclusion will not amount to much unless the rivers are there. And he might be expected under such circumstances to pay at least a superficial attention to the reports of returning travelers.

The curious, perhaps the *most* curious, fact about the contemporary social critic is that he gives no such attention. He assumes his civilization. He assumes his industry. And he devotes his entire energy and all his trained intellectual abilities to the discussion of the literary problem which he also assumes to result. It is enough for him that someone has coined the phrase Machine Civilization and that someone else has developed a theory that our world, under the impact of the machine, is falling to pieces. He believes it all. He believes our age is in fact an age of decay because it was prophesied in 1848 that it *would* be an age of decay. And he dedicates himself to the highly scholarly but hardly useful task of finding in his contemporaries the stigmata of wounds his reading, and not his observation, tells him must have been inflicted. Regardless of the fact that poets have frequently been religious men before, he finds that the poet who is religious now is religious because he dares not face the "actual" (*i. e.*, the theoretic) world. Regardless of the fact that poets have frequently employed a line of shifting accents in the past, he finds that the poet who employs such a line in the present does so because his world is disintegrating—and his metrics must mirror it. Surely scholasticism was never carried farther.

There is, it is true, some excuse for pedantry when facts are scarce. The deductive mind was not contemporaneous with the eclipse of science for nothing. But the industrial facts, few as they are, are hardly few enough to justify the methods of contemporary criticism. *Something* is known. A trend, a line, may be observed. And all the work of such engineers as Scott and Alford makes that line more evident.

Briefly the trend is this: Industrialism is not a static phenomenon but a changing one. And its changes have been internal as well as external—revolutions of the parts as well as revolutions of the whole. It has not only violently and astonishingly increased its tempo and its rate of development but it has, and largely within the last decade, altered its form. Between 1899 and 1919 the whole organism expanded. More goods were manufactured. And at the same time more men were employed. More wages were paid. But beginning about 1919 the process changed. Expansion continued. But it was not expansion of the whole. Some of the parts, as in a vegetable growing under the eye of the cinema, increased at the expense of other parts. Production became greater and greater. Machines became more and more numerous and effective. But the number of wage earners employed did not grow. It shrank.

What had happened was simple enough. Primary power had been so rapidly increased in the period from 1899 to 1919 that it had more than kept up with the increase in the number of workers. The result was that primary power per worker had increased. And the result of that fact and of other related causes was that the productivity of each worker rose about 1919 to such a point that increases in total production no longer required a corresponding increase in number of wage earners. What had happened was simple enough. So simple indeed that it has frequently been expressed without public notice in the graphs of the statisticians. But the implications of what had happened were not so simple. The implications were that about 1919 the mechanization of industry had reached a point in America beyond which increases in production would never again be accompanied by corresponding increases in the number of wage earners employed: that by and from the year 1919 a permanent and growing surplus of men over jobs was foreseeable: that if the apparent change of the period of 1919 should be maintained in later periods, then the year 1919 was a year as critical to American history as the year of Appomattox.

For the change was as revolutionary as the Industrial Revolution itself. It meant a new and utterly different dénouement for industrialism. The old industrialism of the period before the War moved toward a more and more material civilization. The intervention of the machine in one industry lowered prices and freed purchasing power for the establishment of new industries. Production increased all along the line. Jobs increased. (The fears of unemployment entertained by labor had, with the growth of the automobile industry and the radio industry, proved groundless.) And there was nothing to look forward to but a piling up of goods, and a society finding its whole justification in labor for labor's sake. But the new industrialism has no such objective. The new industrialism of the post-war period moves toward a production increasingly freed from human labor and toward a society in which labor will no longer justify life because there will be, within certain limits, no labor to do. Already the almost total elimination of human labor from so basic a human activity as

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the plowing of the ground is foreseeable and the same trend is apparent in other industries.

Needless to say such a development in industry presents political and social problems of the first magnitude. Permanent unemployment will certainly increase unless some such legislative sabotage as the planned economy to limit productivity is practised—and no such method could long succeed. And society will have the choice, which is no choice, between carrying a quarter or a half the population as junked and obsolete men or, on the other hand, spreading the remaining work equally to the advantage of all. But however these problems are resolved, it seems possible to say that the ultimate effect of the present development of industrialism must be a destruction of the whole nineteenth-century idea of work as the means to life, and production and acquisition of commodities as the purpose of life. It is for this reason that the Russian Economy may be said to be industrially obsolescent. The Russian Economy retains the concept of work as the basic duty upon which is rested the right to acquire the means to live, and in all its educational propaganda, work becomes the religion and the morality of the people. But at the same time the party promises, or so its champions contend, an ultimate millennium of leisure. Whereas nothing is more certain than that a society sucking its vitality from the glorification of Work is utterly incapable of leisure and that leisure would inevitably destroy its morality, its religion and the whole vitality upon which it rests. And nothing is more probable than that a society founded upon the obligation to work will find itself discredited by an industrial development which admits of no such duty.

The fact is that both Work and Leisure are concepts from an earlier time. Consumption, in a nation in which 4,000 men can sow the wheat crop for a population of 120,000,000, is no longer a blessing to be enjoyed by those only whose "work" shall entitle them to enjoy it (for where shall they work?) but the mere routine right of a society organized upon a totally different basis and for totally different ends—organized upon a basis which *assumes* material wealth and for an end which has nothing whatsoever to do with material values.

It is this last consideration which overthrows the whole fabric of modern social-literary criticism as it affects the poet. For if the visible trend of industrialism has been correctly read, and if material production and acquisition are to cease to fulfill their present functions as the ultimate end and justification of life, then other ends and justifications will be established. They will be established, not because the people will have been converted to "higher things," but because life must have an orientation and because the direction of that orientation will always be fixed by unsatisfied desire. In a world in which material goods may be taken for granted, that other good which poetry offers will be demanded. And will be found. And the poet who has been loyal to his obligations as a poet will have the hearing which the poet who has converted himself into a proletarian or a capitalist or a social Messiah will not receive. For the one thing which modern industrial society will need and will require of its poets is precisely that thing which the social cant would have them discard. Poetry itself.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

Washington Notes

Roosevelt the Voluble—Getting Down to Brass Taxes—Veterans' Compensation—A Sales Tax with a Beer Chaser

IT MUST be admitted that, so far as his general plans are concerned, there is nothing secretive about the President-elect. Within the last few weeks, from Warm Springs, Washington and Albany, he has issued dozens of ideas, thoughts and suggestions regarding the future which have made good reading and kept the correspondents well supplied with interesting material. This, as I have pointed out, is in refreshing contrast to the glum and taciturn Hoover whose close-mouthed lack of candor, even concerning matters where candor was easier and better, has been pretty trying to those with whom he had to deal. It was—and still is—one of his most irritating traits and has in the past four years bred a vast amount of unnecessary trouble for him.

Here in Washington there is a disposition among some of the older Democrats to think that perhaps Mr. Roosevelt may go too far to the other extreme. Quite plainly he likes to talk and he enjoys conferences with all sorts of people. He has a charming openness and the gift of making all of the many and varied persons with whom he comes into contact feel that he is interested in them and in their schemes, plans and proposals. One result of this is that Washington is full of men who quote the Governor on all sorts of things and who are convinced they know exactly how he feels and what he intends to do.

An analysis of these quotations, however, reveals in nearly all cases a complete lack of the concrete. What they sift down to is that Mr. Roosevelt has evinced a sympathetic interest in what was discussed, but has made no definite commitment except on extremely general and vague lines. In fact, they mean little or nothing except to reveal the friendly nature of the man, his ability to please those with whom he talks, and the pleasure he derives from conversing. His article in the current Cosmopolitan Magazine is another indication of his inclination to express himself. In the article itself there was, of course, nothing remarkable or sensational and nothing new. The remarkable features are, first, that he could have found the time to write it, and second that, having the time, he should have written it.

The point I am trying to make is that the ceremony on March 4 is going to give us a change from an unusually inarticulate President to an exceedingly articulate one

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whose tendency to express himself, privately and publicly, verges on the voluble. But despite his easy flow of language, there is a prudence, not to say wariness, about him that protects him against breaks. He has had a considerable public career and is completely at home both in politics and publicity. The things which he advocates and with which he sympathizes are invariably popular things, and though they are more or less stale, they are none the less agreeable to the public ear. There is nothing to criticize about this. The time for the new President to deal in details has not yet arrived, but it is going to be interesting to see how, when he finally takes hold of the reins of government, he will shift from the generalities in which he has so far been dealing to the handling of concrete realities.

Perhaps it is not quite fair to say that even now he has not got down to details, because he has several of his ablest friends and supporters at work upon certain specific matters directly connected with his campaign promises. One of these is economy. For some weeks now there have been in Washington two or three men, known to be close to the Governor, who are making a detailed investigation of departments with the idea of reduction in expense through consolidation and elimination which will help the Democrats to fulfill their slightly too specific pledge of a 25-percent minimum decrease in the running expenses of the government. In his Hearst article the President-elect repeats this 25-percent promise; he talks about merging agencies and bureaus but does not mention reducing veterans' compensation, without which it would be impossible for him to fulfill his promises. In the end, of course, he will have to tackle that proposition, but neither before the election nor since has he mentioned the subject.

Moreover, I think, there is slight prospect that at this short session Hoover's recommendations along this line will be adopted. It is true that Mr. Hoover recommended similar cuts last spring, but in the campaign his only reference to the subject was to say that if the Democrats proposed to obtain their reductions there, the "grossest injustice" would be done. The inconsistency between what he said then and what he recently said in his message to this Congress is so obvious that little weight is attached to his remarks on the subject and the disposition of Democrats in the House is not to follow him in paring down the veterans' compensation but to wait for their own President to lead the way.

There are, of course, some Democratic leaders in the Senate who take the position that the smart thing for their party to do is to coöperate with Hoover on every economy proposed and particularly those proposed in the Veterans' Bureau. Their theory is—and to me it seems sound—that the more done at this session the easier it will be to redeem the Democratic platform promises later. If it is done at this session, the resentment of the veterans will be directed toward Hoover, rather than toward Roosevelt. If the cut has to be made in veterans' compensation, the intelligent thing to do is to get it over as quickly as possible when the major responsibility can be placed on Hoover's shoulders. Moreover, it would by no means detract from the credit Mr. Roosevelt will gain by fulfilling his promise.

Sensible as this sounds, I am skeptical that it will work out that way, so far as action at this session is concerned. It would require open and active direction of the Democratic forces in House and Senate by the President-elect. His wishes would have to be clearly and unmistakably made known and his influence exerted to the limit. Under those circumstances there is every reason to think a cut even greater than Hoover proposes could be made, but I doubt very much if it can be done by means of under-cover leadership. In that way there would be no aroused public sentiment to protect the individual congressman against the vengeance of the veteran and the strength of the veteran lobbies, which have come to be the most powerful force in Washington.

There has not been the slightest question about the necessity for a special session of the new Congress since the defeat of the Garner repeal proposal on the first day. Apropos of that repeal vote, though considerable deserved credit was given to the Speaker for his enterprise and initiative in making it the first business of the session, there are a good many here who were disposed to question his judgment in forcing the vote on the first day under the conditions he knew to exist. For instance, there were five absent Democrats, all known to be willing to vote for repeal. It seems hard to believe that with a full membership and a few more days' pressure the other votes necessary for the two-thirds majority could not have been obtained. However, it really made little difference. If the repeal had won in the House, the best judgment is that it would have been utterly impossible to get it through the Senate before March. As it was, the vote was so great and so significant that there is little doubt that early in the special session the unqualified repeal will go through and that the fight for modification will begin before summer.

As to beer before March, there are various views. The vote for repeal in the House would seem to ensure the easy passage there of the beer bill, particularly as it will be coupled up with the revenue measure. In the Senate, of course, there will be a long and technical struggle over the matter of the alcoholic percentage and various other features. Moreover, it could be beaten, along with other things, by a filibuster, the short session with its automatic time limitation offering the ideal opportunity for the filibusterers. There is also the question, which no one seems able to answer, of a veto by Hoover.

It is, I am told, Garner's bright idea to vaccinate against a veto by tacking the beer bill on to the sales tax in a general revenue measure. In that way, it is said, a veto would be out of the question. Probably they are right about that, but there is another side to it. Some of the opponents of the sales tax are favorable to the beer bill and some of the opponents of the beer bill could be persuaded to vote for the sales tax. One argument is that Garner's plan of hooking them together would ensure support from both sides, as neither could get what it wanted except by taking what it did not want. The reverse of that, however, might be just as true. For example, each element might care more about defeating the thing to which it is opposed than passing the one it favors. In that case, the combination sales-tax-beer bill might find allied against it the anti-beer and anti-sales-tax forces, which would be hard to overcome—particularly in the Senate.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Mr. Lewis' Uncle Billy

Sherman, Fighting Prophet, by Lloyd Lewis. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 702 pages. $3.50.

IT HAPPENS that I grew up in the planter region of Mississippi, close to memories of the two great Northern generals, Grant and Sherman. With the years going by, I have had the chance to see them through a series, as it were, of perspectives; and my view of General Sherman, and, as a by-product, of this new history of him, may gain from that fact a certain relevance, however minor. It will at least serve as a tiny straw in the wind of his persuasive greatness.

As a child, growing up in the shadow of the War between the States, not wholly lifted even today, these are some of the things I was reminded of; I will try to put them briefly. Their point, in no sense malicious, will soon appear. In December, 1862, General and Mrs. Grant stayed for something around a month at the home of an uncle-by-law of mine, Jacob Thompson, who had been Secretary of the Interior under President Buchanan; General Sherman, in his memoirs, mentions the comfortable house. At the end of the visit the soldiers set fire to the house, Mrs. Grant found the diamonds that had been hidden under tissue paper in a flowered vase on the mantelpiece, and the soldiers roared away through town with the Washington society gowns over their horses' heads. In the meantime, Mrs. Grant had looted not a little around town. One of our friends, a lady whose marriage had been put off when her betrothed was rushed away to the war, told me how one day she heard an altercation in her room upstairs and went to find Mrs. Grant kneeling there at a commode in which were the embroidered linens, bought in New Orleans for the trousseau; the discussion turned on whether she or the soldier standing by had the right to the find, she as the general's wife, he as the finder. In Holly Springs there was a house known always as the house-where-the-Grants-took-the-piano. The house of my great-uncle was one day entered by Colonel Osborn of the Eleventh Illinois, with his company of Negroes, who dragged the owner, seventy-five years old, out by the collar, knocked his wife down with a saber, and so treated a daughter, who was enceinte at the time, that soon her child was born and a few days later died. At a friend of my father's, the soldiers, seeing a new-made grave in the family graveyard and thinking valuables might be thus hidden, dug it up, kicked the coffin open and left his mother's body lying there. Another of our friends, Mr. Wilkinson, then a boy of fifteen, standing on the gallery of his home to watch the marching past, had a pot-shot taken at him, which hit his leg; while down the same street, at my cousin's, a little darkey boy had climbed up into an apple tree to see, and in a merry jest was shot by one of the same soldiers and dropped out of the tree dead, exactly, as my cousin used to say, like an apple falling. Around the mother of another family friend, an old woman stricken in bed with some illness, a group of soldiers, white and black, danced, pricking her now and then with a bayonet point. These few details serve well enough, except to add that whatever frailty words may have, those naked chimneys, at least, the heel prints on the doors, the slashed portraits and so on were not sheer verbiage, nor do I yet believe that Mr. Wilkinson for all those years I saw him on the town square practised only a splenetic limp.

About these incidents the older women in the family, as women do in such matters, grew sometimes fierce in the telling. As to myself, I must confess to feelings less exalted even than anger. In a few minor items I was, in fact, more modern at least by implication, than I knew then: I stuck at the mother business (Freudian); I wondered why men were born if they were only to be killing each other (birth control); I thought that my old aunt was right when she said the pot had boiled over and the scum had come to the top (Marxism); and that you ought not to scatter the belongings of other people right and left (Communism). But what I really most thought was how fine it must be to get a lot of nice things for yourself, and how I should like to march through a rich country and take silver boxes and horses. My father, however, who had run away to join General Forrest's cavalry at fourteen and come through with honors, dwelt very little on any of these things. War was war, he said, and such things were natural to it and always had been. He thought they could have put his friend's mother back into her grave as a sort of consideration, but even that could pass. Then he would quote to me General Sherman's observation that "War is Hell," even by that time a classic (what Sherman really said—it was in Columbus, Ohio, fifteen years after the war—was that "many a boy here looks on war as all glory, but, boys, it is all hell.") In such a view, then, I grew up. It thus happened later on, when I was older, that I could easily agree with my father when he expressed surprise at the imported tumult about Belgian atrocities. What else, he said, did people expect war to be?

During the first year of the World War I went to Amherst College in Massachusetts and found there considerable excitement. Of war topics there were, among diverse others, two with undoubted social possibilities. One was whether President Wilson, who delayed an American declaration of war, was an adulterer. The other concerned a recent visit of Ambassador von Bernstorff, who in a lecture had, with a tact characteristic of the German war diplomacy, compared the raids in the South to those in Belgium. I remember one lady, the daughter of a distinguished authority in one of our largest universities, being so very blown at this that she vowed she would like to see every baby in Germany impaled on a bayonet.

The third step in my little progression of facts is that a few years ago I began to read in the period of the War between the States and after. I read, for example, the memoirs of General Grant, written under such tragic circumstances by a man in whom genius and simplicity and goodness have been widely admitted. Nevertheless I did read with some, if you like, loutish astonishment those calm and quiet records. I read the account of how the general had commanded every effort toward making a good impression in the invaded territories, no pillaging, et cetera; and how in New Orleans he had been thrown from his horse, which was frightened by a locomotive, so that Grant's leg was broken and he was confined to his bed at the St. Charles Hotel for a week, and had then had himself carried on a stretcher to the boat and so up the river to his duties at the siege of Vicksburg. This particular de-

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tail surprised me. General Sherman himself, with perfect dignity, mentions that Grant was twenty-one days in bed with the leg, and I knew that almost any other biographer of Grant would tell you that he was on three sprees during that New Orleans visit, and that General Franklin told Samuel Clemens that with his own eyes he had seen the general fall off his horse drunk. And Grant's harsh story of driving out the Jews from the contraband trade at Memphis puzzled me, knowing how his brother-in-law had been one of the worst at the game, and what a time it took persuading Grant to pack him off. From General Sherman's memoirs my chief surprise was quite otherwise. What surprised me was the even, discreet, almost colorless tone of the writing. If he had not included some of his own letters and reports I might have missed him entirely, save for actions and reactions here and there that were indicative. How then this grave style and steady past propriety in the memoirs of generals? I asked myself that, and was relieved at last to think of Caesar. It was the military tradition in letters. Quintilian, Catullus, half the antique world, crackled with Caesar's indiscretions. With what simple construction his sentences march through his account of himself and through the ranks of burnt-out tribesmen and their boiling wives! At length I seemed to understand. I could return to my mutton.

If so far all this seems trivial, there are, nevertheless, two points to be said of it. In the first place it is no further from Mr. Lewis' book than he is from much of his matter. In the second place it is one way of expressing the power and persuasion and the strange poetry of a unique figure in our history. It is as if, in some childhood landscape of the mind, through the bloody trees and the fatalistic light of some finality, I saw emerge this slim, tall figure, red-haired, too red-haired for patience as he said, honorable, impetuous and rich in nature, devoted, hot and humble, grim, charming. He is sometimes half-mad with his own sincerity, intensity and concentration in the midst of a resentful and red-tape governmental world or a silly newspaper world, or the dull envy of the military. He is a wit by desperation and high spirits, a rushing tongue and a free temper, a fire-eater because of dreams reversed, a kind man and a good friend, a talker, a swearer and a restless solitary. This is not to speak of his youthful taste for Southern living, his desire to be a painter, nor of that cynicism, which nobody knew what to do with in his own day and perhaps not even now would know. It derived, like all significant cynicism, from a combined sincerity and intensity of character and feeling. Its occasion arose when confronted with officialdom, or the spouting easy sham of the world of men, or the glib tinsel of celebrating, greedy mediocrity.

Mr. Lewis' biography, like all biographies in our modern line, has had the usual access to unusual sources. The earlier frontier pages, with Sherman's father and foster father, Thomas Ewing, later in the Cabinet, are vivid and easy as opera—peace to those hearty bones resting at last in pioneer graves! We come then to the better chapters on Tecumseh's early days, then West Point, then the roaming. We get a sense of the youth so intense, so loyal, so strangely pure in natural impulse. Mr. Lewis creates very well for us this youth not naturally philosophic or too long reflective, the desires lively and simple, the motion outward most ardent, the passions half hidden. We have the happy life in the South, the dancing, the friends there, the painting, the taste for luxury and beauty, then the California venture, the marriage to Ellen Ewing after a long engagement, her Catholicism, which he could never accept save as a part of her energy and stress. We see his cleanness, the characteristic actions so erratic, high-toned and uncertain, the personal appeal disarming and lovable. These are the best parts of the biography.

The part that concerns the War between the States is rejoiced with many of Sherman's own words, letters, reports and remarks, which the author repeats, and with pictures of certain unforgettable moments. Though it professes to be a portrait of Sherman, not military history, the book at this point cannot escape the latter burden also. As such it is a sort of warm and vivid and staccato tosh. The immense emotional force of Sherman comes through at times, and a kind of soprano view of his genius and military strategy. Meanwhile, nevertheless, hundreds of those facets to Sherman's habits and movements appear and are kept alive for us. We see his attitude toward Lincoln, getting better as Lincoln himself grew in quality; his desire for decency in the army and its raids; his summary moments; his generous love and recognition of Grant, whose brains he rated less than his own but whose tenacity he set above all men's; his gradual development toward a more ruthless method in war; his submission to what he would not at first have tolerated: the frenzy, debauchery and half-chaos of his Georgia army, with the wagons hiding mulatto women who shared the camp feasts, the smashing, drinking and hilarious waste, which Sherman more or less overlooked because he saw the march to the sea, with all that it comprised, as his first and last means to peace, because also his own temper felt more or less the exasperation of the campaigns, and because he loved and humored his men—never in fact during the war could Sherman bring his men to the shambles as Grant and others might see fit to do. Mr. Lewis' accounts of the meeting between Sherman and Johnston, and of the public attacks on Sherman and the treachery at Washington, are admirable. The picture of Sherman's worn marchers, when the federal troops were brought back from the war to pass in review before the President, is stirring and beautiful. Sherman's contempt for the politicians, for the Negro troops, the thought of whom appalled and disgusted him, and for the Abolitionists, is well presented.

There are moments when this biography, taken as mere history, is only a sort of flaccid sparkle. For example, General Forrest, the Confederate cavalry leader. He gets a snappy paragraph, and a few lines here and there: an aggressive genius, Sherman called him a devil, he even peppered his men once in their posteriors when their advance failed to suit him. It was this delicious creature, however, that Lee pronounced the greatest soldier under his command. There are six biographies of Forrest, scores of accounts of his tactics and engagements, several books on his military strategy. It has been often stated that but for Bragg's jealousy and President Davis' interference, Forrest might have greatly altered Sherman's march to the sea. How and why? As history it is also absurd to see an event passed up in this sentence about Jefferson Davis: "On May 10 Davis was captured while fleeing through

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the dawn dressed in his wife's raincoat and shawl." This is all the author has to say about it. We have only to observe that, first, Lincoln had planned that Davis be merely allowed to escape; second, what difference does the disguise make, if you want a disguise? third, Davis was not "fleeing through the dawn"; he and Mrs. Davis were awakened in their camp by a Negro who had come to warn them of horsemen approaching. In the dark Davis caught up an ulster there that happened to be Mrs. Davis' instead of his own, and as he went out to meet the men she followed him to put a shawl over his head against his blinding enemy, neuralgia. The hoopskirt of the tale was brought out of Mrs. Davis' trunk by a trooper, who in forcing the lock had his hand shot off by his carbine. Barnum, knowing what's what, gave Broadway a scene in the wax works, and history prospered. Alas, all his life Barnum was writing more of our history than he knew!

The account of Sherman's life after the surrender and on to his death is the poorest part of the book. The shame and scorn for the course of events, the restlessness, the refusals to be put up for President, the move to Washington, the life in New York, of that most Uncle Billy period, are such as do not lend themselves so well to the author's method or the tone of his style. Being kissed by young ladies, kissed by the actresses, seen at every first night, making innumerable speeches at dinners and banquets, these were facts enough; but many things otherwise arose, difficult to reveal or bring alive in a vivacious history, difficult to feel in their final depths.

Leaving out the personal experiences, griefs and satisfactions, I will cite one instance as an illustration of how the historical superficiality makes the record here of Sherman superficial. It is where Mr. Lewis comes to the Hayes-Tilden election. He says, "Not until March, 1877, was the question finally decided by a commission in favor of Hayes." That is about all, and the point of it is merely the picture of Sherman in Washington, pacing up and down, cursing and lamenting the fate of the nation and the army should the Democrats assume control. But this is one of the most important and crucial moments in American politics. It is simple history —Rhodes, for example, will do, not only an authority but a Republican as well—that when the returns from the 1876 election came in, the Republican party found itself three states short of staying in power. Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana had to be managed. There is no space here except to say that Grant's sending military coercion to Louisiana, where Tilden was six or eight thousand ahead of Hayes, the delegation of statesmen sent to control the reballoting, the tabulation (behind closed doors to which no Democrat was admitted) by clerks five of whom were condemned criminals, some for murder, the happy returns, and the scandal of the thing, brought on a revulsion in the better Northern sentiment strong enough to alter the course of Reconstruction policy. Nothing in this history could have been turned into a fuller revelation of Sherman. His passion for the Union, his relations with Grant, his reaction to politics, to decency, his mentality, impulsiveness, affections (his brother John was one of the prime agents sent to New Orleans), these and nearly all the rest of him are implicit in this crisis, and might well be used in any study of Sherman that wants to find his center. In the present biography that crisis is only a tableau.

The greatness and vividness of Sherman in his best years, notwithstanding, do emerge from the facility and resource of this talented book. The book does not, in fact, take away very much from Sherman's greatness, but it takes a good deal from ours. STARK YOUNG.

Not on the Ticker Tape

City Godfathers—Lame Ducks in Wall Street—Frozen Assets and Bankers—Job Open in Standard Oil

NEW YORK CITY has been made safe for bondholders. As a result of a Fascist revolution, initiative in legislation in the nation's greatest metropolis has been transferred—at least temporarily—from Tammany Hall to Wall Street.

Curiously enough, the two banks which set themselves up as arbiters of the city's destinies in the role of financial purists were at the very forefront of the financial whoopee prior to October 24, 1929. In fact, returning from Europe a few days before the panic, Mr. C. E. Mitchell of the National City Bank issued a reassuring statement. A few months earlier, when the Federal Reserve authorities were trying to reduce the volume of credit granted for speculation, Mr. Mitchell, almost single-handed, made a gallant gesture on one dramatic day in providing the market with funds.

I quote from the record simply because I think it is important for New Yorkers to know something of the history of its new rulers. Mr. W. W. Aldrich, related by marriage to the Rockefellers and now president of the Chase National Bank, has appeared in the forefront of the negotiations with the city fathers. He came over to the bank during the depression, when the Chase Bank absorbed the Equitable Trust Company, in which the Rockefellers had a huge interest.

There is no question in my mind that the intelligence and capability of Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Aldrich are superior to those of Mr. John F. Curry of Tammany Hall. If that was the choice, perhaps the city has made a good one. But since the proper volume of public expenditures at this stage of the depression is a crucial problem, one cannot be blamed for regretting that the people will play no part in making this decision. Those who have gone mad on the subject of retrenchment ignore the effect of government spending on the price level and on the gross volume of business and employment. Intelligent government spending on job-creating projects is a reflationary procedure and the discontinuance of such activities, as recommended by Mr. Hoover in his last message to Congress, would be a distinctly deflationary move.

For a time I was distinctly puzzled at the behavior of the stock market following Mr. Hoover's message. For a moment I was inclined to believe that the mind of the ticker was moronic when the market rallied after Mr. Hoover again introduced the line of policies and ideas which the public rejected at the polls. But then I recalled that this was one of the few times that the market had rallied after Mr. Hoover had said anything. Then a light dawned and I understood the meaning of the rally.

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Traders who for years had been habitually turning thumbs down on Mr. Hoover's remarks, danced in the street over his lame-duck message because they realized that it virtually signalized the end of Mr. Hoover in office.

Speaking of lame ducks, they have them in Wall Street too. Kuhn, Loeb and Company has taken care of the most eminent financial lame duck in making Mr. Elisha Walker a partner of the firm. According to conventional Wall Street standards, Mr. Walker received a rough deal from A. P. Giannini, active head of Transamerica Corporation and the Bank of America in California. When Mr. Giannini desired to retire at the age of sixty, before the slump, he invited Mr. Walker into the picture. Mr. Walker was at the helm during the long period of deflation and Mr. Giannini became increasingly dissatisfied with the new management, which he succeeded in booting out last February after winning a proxy fight. Though numerous conventional bankers challenged Mr. Giannini's type of leadership, he at once succeeded in arresting the decline of deposits of his bank which had continued over a period of months. By means of aggressive advertising, he greatly augmented deposits, and at present even his local rivals are glad that Mr. Giannini is back. As they put it, he would have been worse on the outside as a critic than on the inside as a builder.

The lack of free salability of assets has greatly limited the freedom of choice of bankers. Knowing this, certain large debtors have been consistently bluffing their bankers. One such instance has just come to my attention. An individual bought a substantial public-utility operating company and placed a 50-percent bank loan on it in more prosperous times. He doubtless expected to resell the property and lift the bank loan. But when conditions changed, he became a chronic renewer of the bank loan. Whenever the banker admonished him against continuing the practice, he bluntly told him that if the bank didn't like it, the lender could sell him out, feeling sure that there would be no bidder for the property under depression conditions. The backbone of the banker stiffened a little the other day when an outside holding company tentatively indicated that it might be interested in buying the property.

In California—page Messrs. Schlink and Chase—producers of advertised brands of canned fruits have recently been complaining of their inability to get better prices for their products than vendors of unbranded merchandise do. Such a development gives a real jolt to "new era" economists.

As the retrenchment craze spreads, the gross volume of business and the price level tend to get further out of line with existing capitalization of corporations, thus inevitably suggesting receivership or more subtle forms of debt repudiation through voluntary adjustments, which American reactionaries apparently consider more respectable than inflation or reflation. This unintelligent preference is largely based on the mistaken belief that we now have a sound currency, despite the vast change in the purchasing power of money since 1929.

When Walter C. Teagle, president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, went over to the Federal Reserve Bank Building to head the Share-the-Work drive, he took his name off his own company's pay roll, it is reported. Evidently he wanted to practise what he preached and make room for some needy executive. L. M. N.

A COMMUNICATION

The Stamped Scrip Plan

SIR: There is one measure little known as yet, but which, I believe, is destined soon to command nation-wide attention, which might bring us substantially out of the depression, if properly applied, in a few weeks. This is "stamped scrip."

As is well known, the two great needs are reflation and stabilization. The reflation must come first and will alone be considered here. Reflation is that degree of inflation which is justified as a corrective to the recent and severe deflation. Beyond this point, inflation is an evil. Neither inflation nor deflation is justified except as a corrective each of the other. To steer our money and credit car safely so as to keep it in the middle of the road we must, whenever it veers toward either side, turn the wheel a little the other way.

The reflationary measures already adopted by the President, Congress and the Federal Reserve System are excellent so far as they go, but unfortunately they have to start at the producer end of the long chain between producer and consumer. The stamped-scrip plan would start at the other, or consumer, end. When the Federal Reserve System pumps credit into the banks, most of it stops there and is not passed on to the ultimate consumer. Many a bank is still bulging with credit, but cannot lend much of it out because its customers, the merchants, are unwilling to borrow it until they know they can use it. They are not yet sure that their own customers, the consumers, are going to buy. Once consumer buying begins, the merchants will borrow with alacrity and will find their banks ready with all the funds they need. Stamped scrip will give the consumer the buying power needed to start up operations from the consumer end. . . .

If the United States government should adopt the plan, it would print, say, one dollar bills on each of which would be, say, fifty-two spaces dated for each successive Wednesday for a year. A postage stamp of, say, two cents must be pasted in each space on or before the Wednesday the date of which is printed in that space. Without being stamped up to date, the dollar bill is not to be accepted at par value but only with a deduction of whatever amount of stamps is missing. With the required stamps attached, it is to be accepted at par value.

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There are various ways of putting such a circulating medium into circulation. Several are mentioned in my "Booms and Depressions." Substantially this form of emergency scrip was used, apparently with success, first in Schwanenkirchen, Germany, in 1931. It is now being used, also with success according to all the reports, in Woergl, Austria. A slightly different form is now being used, also with success, in several towns in the United States in the Middle West, beginning with Hawarden, Iowa. This scrip was used for paying labor in building a city road. The city agreed to accept payments due it in this scrip. The merchants of the town agreed to accept it in payment for their wares. One of the banks encouraged the use of the scrip. At first, the new machinery creaked a little. Some refused to accept the strange "money." But soon the machinery stopped creaking and now seems to be working smoothly. People accepted the scrip readily when they gained confidence that they really could pass it on like money, and as soon as it was generally acceptable, it functioned just as money or checks function. The Hawarden scrip was used primarily to give work to the unemployed. The use of it by the formerly unemployed constituted the consumer buying needed to prime the pump, so to speak.

There is no reserve behind this Hawarden "money." It is redeemable after a full dollar's worth of stamps and five cents more (thirty-five stamps of three cents each) are attached. These stamps are bought of the city with real money, and this money eventually supplies the redemption fund required (plus enough more to pay for the costs of printing). The scrip is thus self-liquidating.

The stamped-scrip plan, if issued as in Hawarden, affords relief for the unemployed, results in public improvements, directly starts up buying and indirectly calls forth bank loans and deposits. It helps city finances, although in the case of Hawarden this was not necessary as the city finances were in excellent shape to start with.

One of the chief advantages of the stamped-scrip plan, as used in Woergl, where a new (one percent) stamp is required every fortnight (in Hawarden the particular form of the plan there used loses this advantage), is the speeding up of circulation. Any holder of the scrip naturally wants to pass it on before the next stamp date arrives. No one wants to keep it long. The stamp operates as a stamp tax on hoarding. It may also be called a sales tax like the tax on checks which we already have. But unlike the stamp on checks, the stamp on the scrip stimulates trade instead of slowing it down. This is partly because of the date limitations which, as just stated, hurry the circulation and partly because the stamped scrip, unlike the stamped checks, operates as a new addition to the circulating medium.

But the chief advantage obtainable from stamped scrip is obtainable only when its use is nationwide. I refer to raising the price level. The price level of Woergl or Hawarden cannot be raised without raising the price level of the rest of the country as well, and a few hundred dollars of new circulating medium, even if it calls forth several thousand dollars of bank loans and deposits, will not suffice to raise the price level of the nation. It is true that the example of Hawarden is being followed by some surrounding towns and an effort is being made to obtain the adoption of the system by counties and later by the entire state of Iowa. . . .

Why should not the lame-duck Congress cover itself with glory by pulling us out of the depression in a few weeks by priming the pump through consumer demand and so let loose the waiting millions of bank credit? Why should not Hoover and Roosevelt coöperate here as well as in the matter of international debts? Each would get more glory by coöperating in a successful reflation than either could get alone by any policy in sight. If this be so, the December session of Congress would not need to be a mere listless, futile, perfunctory going-through-the-motions. It can, if the coöperative spirit already started is followed up, be the means of supplying the missing link between the outgoing of the Hoover-Republican regime and the incoming of the Roosevelt-Democratic regime.

Besides saving time, there is another advantage in national over local action. In local action the machinery is sure to creak at first because the circulation of the scrip must depend on its voluntary, and so gradual, acceptance by the payees. But if the plan is adopted by congressional action, appropriate measures may be taken to encourage or even compel its immediate acceptance by everybody.

There are many details which need not be discussed here. The important thing is that the plan is sound, tried, efficient. It has its limitations. It is not a cure-all. It should be followed up by other measures to reach the goal aimed at by what Secretary Mills calls "controlled credit expansion" and to stop at that goal when it is reached and maintain thereafter stabilization of the price level, avoiding what may then become the new danger of inflation. But just now, as a capstone of what has already been done, we need what stamped scrip can give us and give us faster than any other means in sight.

IRVING FISHER.
Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

CORRESPONDENCE

T. R. B. on the Grill

SIR: Your Washington correspondent has been attacking the validity of election forecasts made by newspapermen after a trip around the country. He is inclined to favor instead the straw votes collected by The Literary Digest and the Hearst newspapers. In the issue of November 9, he made this statement:

> If these polls turn out to be accurate, in future they undoubtedly will play a much more important part in the politics of the country. For one thing what sense will there be in future campaigns for our great metropolitan journals to send their "trained observers" at great expense around the country to report upon conditions? The answer is, none whatever, and it may be that this campaign will see the last of this long established but not markedly productive phase of journalism.

In the preceding issue, T. R. B. devoted a quarter of his article to other sneers at trained observers and ended on this note: "What the trained observers are doing is riding with the tide, basing their articles upon the Literary Digest and Hearst newspaper polls."

Let us see how much substance there is to this contention. The New York Times sent Mr. Arthur Krock of its Washington bureau out to make one of the surveys which T. R. B. ridicules. In an article published November 6, he summarized his conclusions. Mr. Hoover carried six states. Mr. Krock's article stated that the President was sure to carry three of these, Maine, Vermont and Pennsylvania. The three other states which Mr. Hoover carried, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Delaware, were listed

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by Mr. Krock as leaning toward Hoover. He also listed in this category, Michigan, Iowa, and Utah, thus erring by three states.

How close to this did the straw votes come? The Hearst newspapers and The Literary Digest agreed in giving Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut to Mr. Hoover. After a trend toward Roosevelt in the early weeks of the poll, the Hearst figures finally swung around to giving Hoover the state of Pennsylvania. The Hearst figures were wrong in eight instances, giving Delaware to Roosevelt and giving to Hoover, Colorado, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Rhode Island. The Literary Digest was in error in five instances, giving Pennsylvania and Delaware to Roosevelt, and Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island to Hoover. Mr. Krock's estimate of the result appears to have been closer to the actual returns than the straw votes were. . . .

T. R. B. constantly exhibits an animus toward Washington correspondents. But what is his own record as a political diagnostician? Within one month, he made these flat statements, all of them erroneous. In the June 1 issue, he wrote:

> He [William Gibbs McAdoo] is determined that this time no New Yorker shall be named, or anyone picked by the New York group. . . . His hostility to the Smith-Raskob group is elemental, but it is understood that he is equally opposed to Roosevelt. He will do his best to nominate Garner, but when that possibility fades, as it is sure to do, there is reason to believe he will incline toward Baker.

Not many weeks after this was written, Mr. McAdoo was throwing his support to Franklin D. Roosevelt, New Yorker. Never was there any indication that he favored the candidacy of Newton D. Baker . . .

In the June 29 issue, he made this last-minute prophecy: "the conviction is strong that the inherent weakness of Roosevelt in the East is so apparent that his candidacy will crumble soon after the leaders from the states assemble and size up the situation."

It seems to me that what has been crumbling is the Washington correspondence of T. R. B.

New York City. REID BYRON.

The Students Fight against War

SIR: In the ringing words of Romain Rolland, "War is coming! From all sides war is coming, menacing all peoples. It can burst out tomorrow. If it sets fire to one corner of the world it cannot be localized. The whole of civilization, the whole world, is in danger."

Voicing the will of the World Congress against War, Henri Barbusse and Sherwood Anderson have appealed to the students of America to take action, to organize a nationwide Congress against war and the preparations for war, to fight shoulder to shoulder with the workers and intellectuals throughout the world against this impending destruction for the benefit of a few.

The students of America and throughout the world cannot remain unconcerned and untouched by this danger. Students in China are being murdered and crushed by the war movements already taking place; students in Germany are being armed by Fascism for their own destruction; students in the Latin Americas are suffering the full force of American and English imperialism whenever the puppet governments are menaced; throughout the world, students are being "educated" by textbooks, by administrations, by military authorities, to become willing leaders in crushing resistance to war, in leading regiments to save profits. The intellectual and physical equipment of university laboratories and research departments are put to the service of developing war materials more destructive and more effective in killing than already exist.

In America, student bodies are being prepared mentally and physically. Already, increased militarization of the student body by campus R.O.T.C. units, by summer training camps, by special rifle corps, by jingoistic classroom teachings, have turned out thousands of students willing to "save the world for democracy." Graduation Day sees hundreds of leading colleges and universities conferring honorary degrees on blatant militarists and broadcasting their speeches. Each year sees larger numbers of universities opening their doors to these war forces; each year sees faculties more subservient to this "education."

The students of the world must act! The wordy barriers of the classroom and the textbook must be broken down. We urge the students all over the United States to send delegations to the Student Congress against War to be held in Chicago on December 28-29. We urge the masses of students of the country to come in such numbers that the militarists and the imperialists will pause before the ringing protest of our Congress. Write to the organization at P. O. Box 327, Grand Central Annex, New York City.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDENT CONGRESS AGAINST WAR,

EDMUND STEVENS, Chairman, DORA ZUCKER, Secretary, MARGARET BAILEY, Treasurer, SHERWOOD ANDERSON, HENRI BARBUSSE, JOE COHEN, GEORGE E. COUNTS, H. W. L. DANA, DONALD HENDERSON, REED HARRIS, H. J. MULLER, CORLISS LAMONT, HARRY MAGDOFF, SCOTT NEARING, GEORGE PERAZICH, NORMAN SPITZER, E. SHARFARMAN.

New York City.

Sex and Art

SIR: I have just been reading the current issue of Contact, newest and smartest of the American little magazines. You might like to know about some of the stories in it.

The first one tells how a married minister, in an American small town, seduces his servant girl.

Another describes an assignation between a young newspaper man and a coarse and brutal woman.

A third is a realistic scene where a girl is about to undergo an abortion.

Another tells how a young man rescues from suicide a girl who has been seduced and abandoned, whom he also intends to seduce and abandon.

Another describes the means used by a Rumanian peasant to prove to his village that he is no cuckold, that the village priest is not, as suspected, living with his wife.

Another story describes the life and death of a drunken bum on the south side of Chicago. A fifty-cent prostitute who is supporting him gives him money for a drunken debauch during which he is run over by an automobile.

Another story makes the point that a marriage which is not consummated for some time is likely to end in disillusionment.

Another piece of prose in the magazine is a collection of incidents in a doctor's life. There are sixteen anecdotes, of which seven deal directly with sexual matters.

This issue of Contact is respectfully submitted to the authors of the recent symposium which said that American creative art is sexless.

New York City. W. T. M.

Christmas in the Mining Camps

SIR: There will be no Christmas festivities in the lonely mining camps of the Kanawha Valley this year except through the Christmas parties planned by Pioneer Youth and the League for Industrial Democracy, which for two successive summers have carried on workers' education among the miners as an auxiliary to the union organization which they have built. We urge your readers to collect and send as many toys, as many gifts as possible for the children, as much warm clothing as they can, and ship them direct (prepaid, please) to the Christmas Party Committee, The West Virginia Mine Workers' Union, Room 9, Old Kanawha Valley Bank Building, Charleston, West Virginia. Cash contributions for the purchase of oranges, candy and other party expenses may be sent to Pioneer Youth, 69 Bank Street, New York City, or to the League for Industrial Democracy, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

MARY FOX,
Executive Secretary of the L. I. D.
WALTER LUDWIG,
Executive Director of Pioneer Youth.

New York City.

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The Unfolding Earth

Earth Horizon: An Autobiography, by Mary Austin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 390 pages. $4.

SOMEWHERE Mary Austin speaks of the luck that may attend creative enterprises, when materials come to hand as though drawn by a magnet. When she was twelve she learned of Hugh Miller's "Old Red Sandstone" at a local Chatauqua. She thought the title had "a calling sound." After several years of saving the book became her own, the first she ever bought for herself. It was like her thus to seize upon a work, perhaps the single one of the time, that would stir basic qualities in her own temperament, and moreover had a peculiar significance among that American "folk" of which she is writing. "The Old Red Sandstone," written by a Scotsman of the geological history of his native Cromarty, should be included in the roster of essential American influences. To touch upon, even as marginalia, the points of illumination and stimulus it offered in this country for forty or fifty years of the last century would be to write an essential passage in the history of the American mind. The Scots mason-geologist created a sense of the ancient earth and its grandeur with a conviction of immensity of pattern, something no American writer was able to give, not Thoreau, not Audubon with all his exploratory genius —a sense and a conviction that seemed to meet a need for synthesis and scale among Americans caught in the breathless experience of possessing new country.

Hugh Miller transformed Mary Austin's sense of earth —"the earth became transparent, molten, glowing"—and she remembered "the feel of the author behind the book." Miller was a notable personality; he was more than a geologist, he was a mystic, wrought upon by the imaginative inheritance of the folk, his own people, the Scots of Cromarty. These prepossessions are only slightly striated through "The Old Red Sandstone," but for Mary Austin slight traceries would be enough. When her major themes became articulate they were "the totality that is called Nature," "the quality of experience called Folk," "the frame of behavior known as Mystical." As an original writer of the first order she has translated them into terms that bear little relation to those formed by Hugh Miller. She dwells here only upon a new sense of "the unfolding earth." The influence of a single book does not of course account for her: but it suggests her instinctive appropriation of fundamental influences of her time, and her willing, penetrative, even clairvoyant use of them. She has always been able to explore some significant matrix—indeed one after another—which she has made yield creative elements, working with the grain, so to speak, though often against obstacles, and discovering hidden formations.

In "Earth Horizon" Mary Austin has explored her own life, and the book has the impactive power of character free in a natural medium. She is a born autobiographer, with an uncompromising interest in herself that flows without false hindrance through experiences achieved or imposed, bringing forth personal references in many moods, the play of wit, the torment and clearing of emotion, the unfolding of a long creative absorption. Those concerned with sheer personality, those who wish to follow an extraordinary career, will find these here in abundance. But the title is the farther measure of the book. Without loss of ardor or of the personal focus it creates large perspectives.

A primal source for Mary Austin was that rich bottom land of southern Illinois to which her people had been drawn, a country where Indian mounds might be seen "mysteriously arising among mazy creeks," a land sown with bindweed and wild phlox, where sheets of blue violets lay about rotting tree trunks in the woodlots, where old tunes might be heard, old ways of speech, cryptic Negro chants full of connoted history and lore. This country could also produce a principal of schools named Xenophon Xerxes Crum. There the florid and the stiltedly cultural were coming into bloom, temperance societies were afloat, and Frances Willard was exercising her highly personal sway. Mary Austin tells of these phenomena without missing a touch of the shallow or stunted; she is aware that if Lincoln was formed by this country, "there too Pegasus might be impounded among the cockleburs." But her analysis of Frances Willard is both trenchant and highly tolerant: it is a humanly complex piece of portraiture. Mary Austin sees these people as gradually forming a folk, under enormous difficulties. She has wise things to say of revivals and the profession of religion as efforts to establish common forms of communication. She defends Longfellow as offering a gesture they missed to those who had kept their inheritance of eighteenth-century gentility, and she notes that the pretty names of quilts and woven coverlets otherwise sustained them. With a certain hardihood she insists that the whatnot contained "the hidden life, the unconfessed root of the art impulse from which I am indubitably sprung," and she elucidates the whatnot, "with its odd, and for the most part attractive, collection of socio-historical fetishes . . . the tropic shells . . . the glass paper weights with flowers inside . . . the mineral specimens from California . . . the polished buffalo horn . . . all those curious keys that unlocked for the ancestors esthetic emotion and intellectual curiosity."

With a gift for bringing quite disparate events into striking synchronization, Mary Austin has created a torrent of remembrance whose factual values are superlative; but it is the breadth of her interpretation and her feeling for social coherences that give this a living force: and she transmutes this once again by continual synthesis with the creative, the imaginative, life.

It was characteristic that when the family went to California and took up land at Tejon young Mary was desolate, lost, ill, yet "consumed with interest as with enchantment." She lacked the names of plants, she had not yet learned weather signs or animal behavior; if the country had a history such as she knew in Illinois, she hadn't heard it. The deadlock was broken by a meeting with General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, who had known everything, seen everyone, been a party to all great matters in California since Pio Pico's time, who took her to an Indian village and let her learn of Indian medicine making, put her in the way of getting old military and agricultural reports, and talked. She watched sheep-herders, vaqueros, cattle on "warm, last-lighted slopes," and learned how Indians live off a land where more sophisticated people would starve. For her this rootage in the past, in the soil, among a race, was essential. In the sweep of years in California she came to know not only comprehensive figures like Beale but haunted characters of Comstock days, stage-drivers, *mahalas,* herdsmen, Indian women of the wickiups, a Paiute medicine man. Once she brought in the Mojave stage; her adventures were endless, and fortunately the torrent bears any number of them. There were bitter hardships, times when she was "crammed and replete with the power of desolate places," but there was also the deep impingement of the land itself, in the *arroyos,* the desert

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country, in that trough of the great Sierra Fault where a mineral lake lay "blankly opaque like a great lidless eye" with a low mottled range to east and south, beyond which was Death Valley. Under these influences the underlying patterns of her temperament pressed to the surface. The mystical experience was resumed, and the long sequence of imaginative writing followed.

The strong bias of Mary Austin's feminism, drawn through the entire fabric of her self-portrayal, could have sustained this autobiography if other, deeper elements had been lacking. Among the more personal turns her penetrative talk of individuals—Sterling, Bierce, the chance characters at Inyo—would have given distinction to any book. She links William James, with whom she once talked, and the Medicine Man of the Paiutes, who taught her the Indian technique of prayer. Here one may branch off, if one likes, into speculation as to the sequences that have led Mary Austin, a daughter of pioneers, "a born pragmatist," to those "affective values" in religion and poetry which she here describes, encircling again a portion of the thesis of "The American Rhythm." Many such fertile digressions may be made, leading to others in the procession of her books. This autobiography is indeed inexhaustible. It is unique in its testimony as to those ancestries and perceptions and social coherences fundamental for the imaginative writer. It is unique in portraying a powerful and difficult struggle to explore and maintain them.

CONSTANCE ROURKE.

Tammany Goes for a Ride

What's the Matter with New York? by Norman Thomas and Paul Blanshard. New York: The Macmillan Company. 379 pages. $2.

Criminals and Politicians, by Denis Tilden Lynch. New York: The Macmillan Company. 256 pages. $2.

SOONER or later, both the fool and the knave get their reward"; and Stevenson added, "The fool soon, and the knave late." Periodically in its century and a half of existence, Tammany Hall has been publicly spanked and sent to bed without its supper. Nothing short of exceedingly good luck will permit it to escape such a fate next November. But Tammany is unusually lucky. Along with the nation, it enjoyed unprecedented prosperity during the Coolidge era, and it has managed to prolong this prosperity until the present hour. Now it finds itself being brought to book. The immediate causes of its difficulties are an impending deficit and an unenthusiastic bond market. The deeper causes are to be found in a growing popular resentment. The employed and those who have suffered drastic pay cuts are resentful of the luxury of the Tammany war lords. Taxpayers, large and small, who have grumbled for years that they could not pay their taxes, now find that they literally cannot. But the greatest menace to Tammany's security is the prospect of its being overwhelmed next November, if the depression continues, by the same vague dissatisfaction which engulfed Mr. Hoover.

Though there have been many historical accounts of Tammany Hall, it is strange that there have been so few attempts to describe the organization functionally. Most of the stories that have been written are replete with its early history, and full of personalities that have been close to the footlights on the Tammany stage; few have gone behind the scenes to disclose the mechanism itself. Norman Thomas and Paul Blanshard offer a thorough and readable account of Tammany's workings. Their interest in the New York City scene has been intensified since the Thomas campaign of 1929. Encouraged by Thomas' impressive showing, a group of Socialist and non-Socialist supporters banded together to form the City Affairs Committee, of which Paul Blanshard is executive director. This organization has become one of the keenest and most effective critics in the city today.

"What's the Matter with New York?" is largely confined to the recent period of Tammany's history, during which these authors have met it face to face. Much of it deals with matters with which they have first-hand contact. The rest is concerned with the disclosures of various recent investigations, particularly the three which Judge Seabury has headed. The Seabury revelations have received considerable publicity, but here is an attempt to sort out the facts he has brought to light, and present them in a consistent manner, so as to show how the Tammany structure works from beginning to end. The investigations themselves, and much of the publicity which has attended them, have overemphasized individual peculation and have paid more attention to the picturesqueness than to the importance of the facts disclosed.

The authors of this volume seek to analyze the sources of Tammany's power. They have had contact, both of them, with gang rule at elections, they have witnessed the manipulation of the process of justice, they have seen the political grafters building up patronage machines, looting the city treasury, racketeering in contracts and land sales and profiteering in human misery. They are persuaded that if Tammany did not exist, some other machine would rise to take its place. The graft and oppression revealed in New York City are not merely the bad deeds of bad men, but the faulty workings of a faulty system. The authors are particularly concerned with demonstrating that "the roots of civic corruption in American life lie deep in a predatory economic system, and that the fight for clean government is only one battle in the larger struggle for a just social system."

Mr. Lynch provides the one chapter necessary to complete the Thomas-Blanshard portrait—namely, the relation of politics to modern racketeering. He is a staff writer on The New York Herald Tribune, and his volume is a series of articles reprinted from that paper. His approach is less methodical and his factual content less cautiously accurate than that of Thomas and Blanshard. His volume, too, overemphasizes the role of individuals. Some of the figures he employs would be difficult to check. He uses, for example, Grover Whalen's figure of 32,000 speakeasies in New York City in such a way as to give the impression that there would be this many establishments operating with bar, bartender, free lunch and all, whereas it is improbable that there are more than a third as many speakeasies properly so-called. The rest of the places on Mr. Whalen's list were drug stores, delicatessens, beauty parlors and what-not, dispensing an occasional bottle. But though his book may be lacking in the precision which characterizes the work of Thomas and Blanshard, the abiding picture which he presents is essentially true.

Lynch is among those who believe that prohibition has endowed the underworld with a lavish income. Though it is certainly too much to say that the alliance of politics and the underworld "began with the advent of prohibition," it is certainly clear that prohibition has brought huge wealth to these inveterate allies. His story of the Phoenix Cereal Beverage Company, operated by "Owney" Madden, "Big Bill" Dwyer and an unnamed partner powerful in

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Tammany, is particularly engrossing. His no less interesting account of the milk, laundry and cleaning-and-dyeing rackets raises questions as to whether this feature of our metropolitan life is so intimately linked with bootlegging that it would not survive the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. And he makes only an occasional mention of labor-union racketeering.

We are on the eve of dramatic reform. The speedy modification of prohibition seems certain and the displacement of Tammany from New York's City Hall seems probable. The two changes would remove much social waste from our system, but how much lasting social accomplishment do they promise?

JOSEPH MCGOLDRICK.

No Geography

Van Loon's Geography, by Hendrik Willem Van Loon. New York: Simon and Schuster. 545 pages. $3.75.

HENDRIK VAN LOON has a picturesque and active imagination. One thinks of him primarily as a historian—of the telescopic rather than the microscopic variety—but what he has to say on any subject makes interesting reading.

Ten years ago he got a letter asking him to write a geography that was human instead of being just a long string of non-functioning facts such as the complainant had been compelled to study—and forget. This criticism of school texts was merited, especially twenty years ago. Van Loon has replied to his correspondent by writing this book, and by illustrating it with a profusion of drawings and maps dashed off in his familiar style. The chance is slight indeed that his correspondent's children will have the book assigned to them in school, but they may dip into it at home. Adults will find it worth reading for the penetrating opinions of an original mind expressed in piquant and often amusing style. "Van Loon's Geography" has many virtues, but few of them are calculated to appeal to geographers.

Apparently, though a Hollander, the author wrote for the American public; otherwise he would scarcely speak of England as a "funny little country." But he quotes the rambling European definition of geography rather than the much better American definition laid down twenty-five years ago by William Morris Davis, of Harvard, that geography is the study of the *relationship* between the earth and the organisms that live upon it.

Geography has not shone brilliantly in the field of literature. Dr. Isaiah Bowman, director of the American Geographical Society and therefore perhaps titular head of the profession in America, explains this fact by saying that geography is a hard subject (perhaps the hardest) to present, because you are always dealing with a group of people in a situation as influenced by that situation. The situation is always a composite of soil, surface, temperature, rainfall, elevation, population and other environmental elements which you wish the reader to have in mind before you begin. Unfortunately your reader's mind is a blank on these various subjects, and you are always pressed by the temptation to give him a lethal dose of geographic elements.

Van Loon, not being a geographer, escapes this dilemma by dealing with only a few geographical facts. They are often telling facts, sometimes unimportant, and too often incorrect. For example, "The rainfall of the tropics is both regular and abundant." Its conspicuous irregularity is attested by the drought-famine zones of Brazil, the Sudan, India and Australia; its frequent lack of abundance by the fact that the world's deadest deserts—Atacama, Sahara, the Empty Quarter of Arabia—are chiefly within the tropics. This is one of many egregious errors that might be picked out of the ninety pages of geographic principles which precede the four hundred pages dealing with various countries.

The country chapters are well introduced: "The Netherlands, the swamp on the banks of the North Sea that became an empire"; "Denmark, an object lesson in certain advantages of small countries over large ones." . . . There follow many and striking statements of geographic fact, but often they are not made to function. Here is the type of thing he writes:

> The Chinese are nominally Buddhists but every Chinaman from the humblest laundry-man in Mott Street to the most powerful of the old Mandarins had fallen under the influence of that shrewd old sage, Kung-fu-tsze or Confucius, who during the second half of the sixth century had preached his gospel of common, everyday horse-sense without wasting much time upon vague discussions about the Life Hereafter. And it was completely in keeping with the Confucian notions about the "sensible thing to do" that the Chinese rulers spent the greater parts of their revenue upon public improvements, upon canals and irrigation dams and Chinese walls and river improvements, but just enough upon their temples and shrines not to make the Gods feel that they were in any way being slighted. . . .

This lively and interesting description of the Chinese mind is anything but geographical. The truth is that the greater part of this book is history, entertaining, telescopic and perhaps more prejudiced than it need be. No man can get away from his past, not even Van Loon.

J. RUSSELL SMITH.

Red Pilgrimage

Beyond Desire, by Sherwood Anderson. New York: Liveright, Inc. $2.50.

IN "Beyond Desire" Anderson has told the story of certain persons who live in a Georgia mill town. The central character is Red Oliver, a young man who, vaguely desiring to identify himself with the workers, takes a job in the mill. The second part describes a group of mill girls whose lives only slightly touch Red's, and the third is concerned with Ethel Long, who experiments briefly and unsatisfactorily with Red, but faces a different set of problems and moves in another orbit. In the last part we return to Red; disgusted with his failure to participate in a strike of his fellow workers, he goes to another town, takes sides with the Communists and sacrifices his life.

Because the seven years since he wrote "Dark Laughter" have brought Anderson to an alliance with Communism, one is interested in "Beyond Desire" not merely for what it is in itself but for what it augurs for the future. Communism, after all, is sharp and hard, tolerant of subtleties and qualifications, but not of vagueness and confusion, whereas Anderson's virtues have been the honesty with which he has expressed his own bewilderment and the insight with which he has recorded the bewilderment of others. Anderson seems to need the strength and clarity

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which Communism can give, but there is always a danger that such a temperament as his may be destroyed if subjected to too strong a light.

"Beyond Desire" makes it clear that Anderson has not been destroyed, and that, indeed, in many ways he has not changed. Red is in certain respects the familiar bewildered adolescent; the mill girls are just such inarticulate workers as he has time after time portrayed with surpassing skill; Ethel is a modern woman, conscious of man's failure, thinking that perhaps women will find a way out. The same questions interest him, and he uses the same oblique method in approaching them. There is something of the old incoherence and even of the old sentimentality. But the old virtues are here, too, and some new ones. There is the strange and utterly convincing evocation of the dreams and emotions that lie below the surface of speech. There is the troubled, patient, vigilant honesty, and the shrewd, sensitive power of observation. And there is new strength in the style, despite lapses into the sprawling self-abandonment of "Dark Laughter"; the writing for the most part is edged and tense. From beginning to end the book, despite the obvious lack of unity, seems to be held firm by a disciplined mind. He wavers now and then, slips into his old trick of aimless meditation, loses himself as in the past in the celebration of hopeless bewilderment; but always he breaks out of the morass, plants himself on firm ground and marches ahead.

Anderson, one suddenly realizes, has not turned to Communism because of some change in his nature; he has continued to drift with the currents that flow through the minds he knows so well. But now the direction of these currents is apparent. They sweep him out of the murky backwaters where for so many years he has stagnated. "There's something worth living for—dying for," says Red. "Is it this thing called Communism?" "Let's have a union," say the mill girls. "A Communist one I hope," Doris adds. Red's college instructor tells him to be "a radical because being a radical is a little dangerous in America and will grow more dangerous. It is an adventure. Life is too safe here. It is too dull." Red's friend Neil has a mistress, a Communist, who thought "there was something beyond desire, but that you had to satisfy desire and understand and appreciate the wonders of desire first." Ethel, who has not yet satisfied desire and who must therefore solve that problem first, nevertheless dreams of what may lie beyond. Discontent, the bewilderment Anderson has so frequently and impressively described, is taking shape, finding direction, marching ahead. To what? Anderson does not know, but he is determined to find out.

Realizing all this, one sees that Anderson's having taken the stand he has is peculiarly important. It is not merely a matter of a famous author's coming out for Foster and Ford. The awakening of a people may be foreshadowed in this awakening of a writer who has always been close to them.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

The Laughing Pioneer, by Paul Green. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $2.

THIS IS Paul Green's first novel; the theme is not, however, a new one for Paul Green. Again, as in "The House of Connelly," the older and perhaps gentler South decays visibly and unpleasantly, while a woman of thirty, the last of her line, pines away in pride, and with love for a no-count young man who recalls, too definitely, Synge's Playboy of the Western World. The boy builds up the lady's run-down farm, worships the lady, is beaten by night-riders because of her, and the lady dies. The tenuous story scarcely merits the long attention it receives, and the implied social situation seems pasted on to give the story body and substance. The really distinguished element in this novel is the dialogue, rich when it should be, sparse and simple when the situation demands; the writing around it seems forced and clumsy in comparison. Always the perpetual disappointment recurs in reading Green's work that it is never what, reasonably, it might have been; "The Laughing Pioneer" belongs in the halfway house between excellent and mediocre work.

K. W.

Book Notes

AMERICANA

OZARK MOUNTAIN FOLKS, by Vance Randolph. *New York: The Vanguard Press. 279 pages. $3.75.*

The informal narrative is often a highly satisfactory means of drawing together folklore, folksong and folk-belief from those old deposits of native life where they still exist. The merely scientific collection sometimes lets a considerable amount of life fall through its net. The formal story is likely to constrain these materials or stretch them into unnatural climactic patterns. Here, as in his earlier volume, "The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society," Mr. Vance Randolph has drawn upon an obviously friendly relationship with people in an out-of-the-way corner of the Ozarks and has told—or let them tell—of witches and witch-riders, frolics and night-riders, "literaries," schools, singing-schools and "ballets." They relate their own tall tales, and fine productions some of these are, proving—if nothing else did—their Tennessee or Kentucky ancestry. Throughout, Mr. Randolph seems to have caught the underlying rhythms of their speech, and he has avoided that tendency to overplay the picturesque which sometimes besets the enthusiast. A few characters appear, but without too much stress upon their fates and fortunes; this is the narrative of a people, not of individuals. With Mr. Wayman Hogue's "Back Yonder"—another narrative in the unaffected style—the two books of Mr. Randolph's make an excellent symposium on the people of the Ozarks.

BELLES LETTRES

LOST LECTURES, or the Fruits of Experience, by Maurice Baring. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 249 pages. $3.*

The author of an admittedly distinguished life of Mary Queen of Scots, claiming to be "disappointed, bald and fifty-seven," airs his very British thoughts on Gilbert and Sullivan, calling them respectively the blue and white papers of a seidlitz powder; on Duse, of whom he writes with lush enthusiasm; on the English public school, which he views with a complacency quite rightly foreign to a writer like Robert Graves; on Punch and Judy shows, apropos of which he makes some sensible remarks about the production of Shakespeare and the theatre in general. His markedly British attitude in these essays, some of which have been delivered as public lectures at Oxford, permits him to slur—whenever the chance arises—anything American and to identify most vulgar manners of thought as Americanisms.

MEMOIRS

BLOODY YEARS, by Major F. Yeats-Brown. *New York: The Viking Press. 312 pages, illustrated. $2.75.*

The book opens with a rapid, skillful and dramatic survey of the concluding years of the Ottoman Empire. The character sketches of the cynical but unwise Sultan Abdul Hamid, his dubious ministers and the Young Turk leaders of the rebellion against him, are clear and interesting. The first section ends in the midst of the confusion that reigned in Constantinople on the eve of the World War. From here the narrative jumps swiftly forward in time and space; it is now autobiography, but told

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with a brave resolve at impersonality. The author is caught in a damaged plane by Arabs in Mesopotamia and carried off to a dungeon near the Bosphorus. He finds that Constantinople is much as it was on the outbreak of the War, but with the confusion intensified. Several times he escapes from prison under circumstances more comic than adventurous, but is not actually free until the Allied occupation of the city. The spirited style that made the author's previous book, "The Lives of a Bengal Lancer," so popular, also serves him well in this volume; but he is here so doggedly objective and keeps his emotions at such distance from himself that they remain distant to the reader.

Unemployment

UNEMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF IN ONTARIO, 1929-1932, by H. M. Cassidy. *Toronto: J. M. Dent and Company. 290 pages. $2.*

This book is a simple factual study of the various methods of unemployment relief in the largest Canadian province, supported by tables of statistics and analysis of them. In general, the problem is approached in much the same manner as in American cities; the methods used are public works, direct relief and private charity. There is, however, government financial support for municipal effort, and a partial moratorium on mortgages. A considerable part of the book is devoted to analysis of the benefits, both from the point of view of the employment created and of the public work accomplished, of different kinds of "made work." The experience of the Canadian cities has been that public works are much more expensive and yield less relief than direct aid, while the projects accomplished are often unnecessary or unimportant.

Fiction

MY SISTER, MY BRIDE, by Cyril Hume. *New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.*

To read this novel is an exciting experience, and at the same time a disappointing one. After many passages of poignancy, humor, controlled sentimentality and vivid drama, Mr. Hume kicks the props from under the structure in a maudlin "Epitaph." Until this point the story is fresh: a brutally domineering father brings disaster upon himself, his feckless son and the young girl—an epitome of fine innocence open to love—who suffers the adoration of both men. In Lawrence, the father, Mr. Hume has created a memorable character.

Contributors

Morris Llewellyn Cooke, consulting engineer and lecturer on scientific management and municipal administration, was formerly director of the Giant Power Survey in Pennsylvania and is now a trustee of the Power Authority of the State of New York.

Archibald MacLeish, whose "Invocation to the Social Muse" was published in the October 26 issue of The New Republic, is the author of "New Found Land," "Conquistador" and other books of verse.

Irving Fisher, who has been a professor of Political Economy at Yale since 1898, is the author of a number of books on economic and political subjects, a recent one being "The Stock Market Crash."

Constance Rourke, biographer and social historian, is the author of "Troupers of the Gold Coast, or the Rise of Lotta Crabtree," "American Humor: A Study of the American Character" and other books.

Joseph McGoldrick, a member of the New York bar, teaches Public Law at Columbia University. He recently appeared before the Hofstadter Committee to testify concerning the New York City budget.

J. Russel Smith is professor of Economic Geography at Columbia University and the author, among other books, of "North America," an economic geography describing the continent as the home of man.

Granville Hicks, who is at present working on a study of the American novel since the Civil War, is an assistant professor of English at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

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